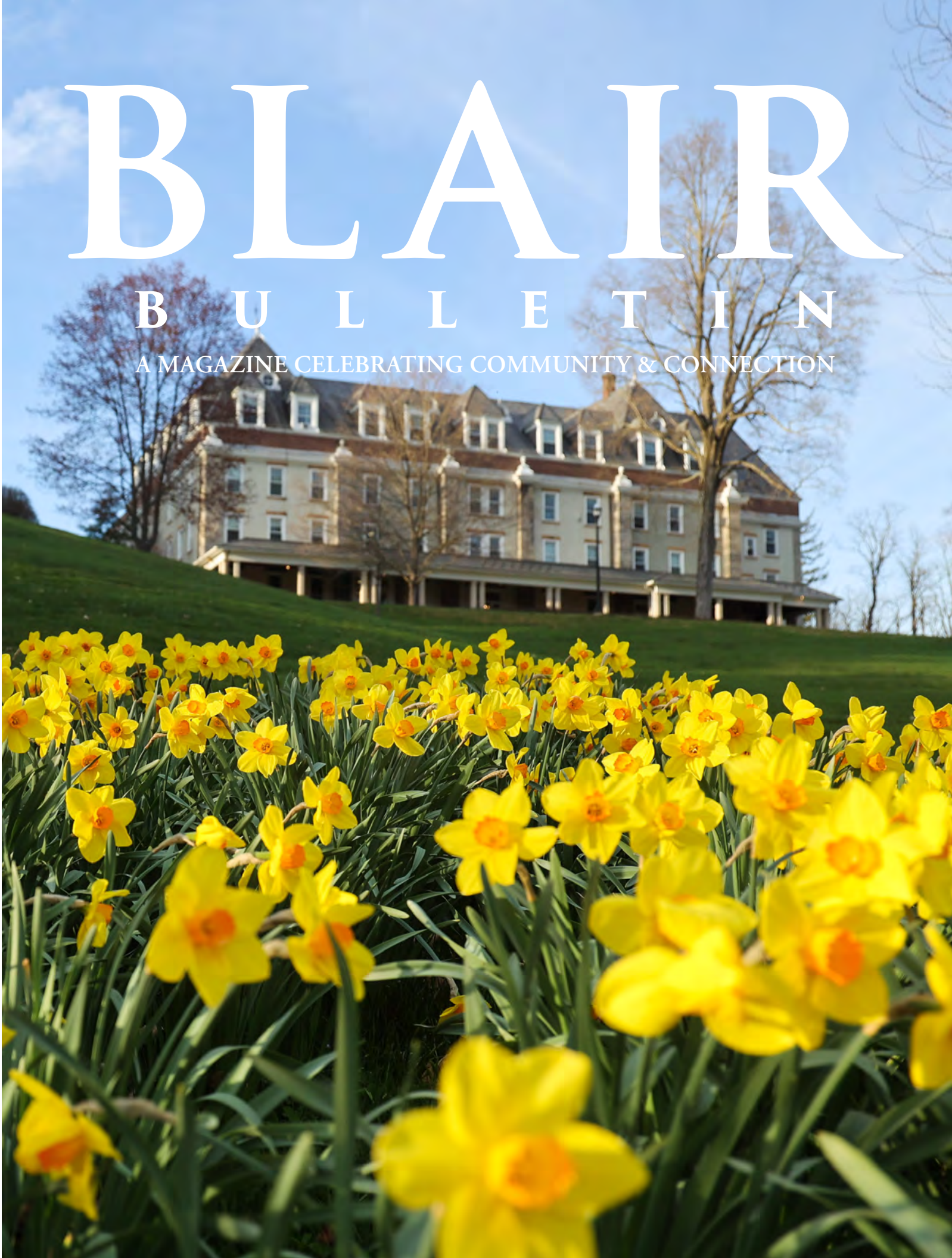


BLAIR

BULLETIN

A MAGAZINE CELEBRATING COMMUNITY & CONNECTION



Photo by Director of School Photography Tyson Trish

The sun sets over Blair's sculling practice in October on Paulinskill Lake in Stillwater, New Jersey.



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Every year, the vibrant daffodils blooming on Blair Academy's front hill herald the arrival of spring.

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Submit a letter to the editor: What do you think about the stories in this issue? Send your comments to bulletin@blair.edu.

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



"For the benefit of many old friends of Blair, who are not able to come back to see us, I welcome this opportunity of bringing you in touch with Blair life as it is today, so that you may know our hopes and aspirations and that we may have your loyal support in carrying forward Blair's high purpose of service."

—Blair's 10th Head of School Charles Breed, introducing volume 1, issue 1 of the *Blair Alumni Bulletin*, 1929

As we begin to bring our 177th year to a close this spring, we are excited to introduce a new layout and look for the *Blair Bulletin*, which has long served as a point of connection for our community. The first issue was printed 96 years ago as a simple newsletter detailing routine happenings on campus; today, we are fortunate that the publication has grown to be a robust source of news from the hilltop and a celebration of the accomplishments, experiences and contributions of students, alumni and families around the world.

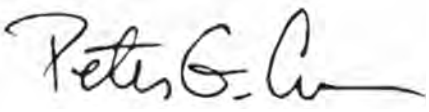
Over the years, the magazine has evolved and its aesthetics have changed with the times and institution. This latest iteration seeks to be inviting, easy to navigate and cohesive. The stories in this issue—which focus on Blair legends and lore dating back to our founding, the ways in which we are leveraging the power of artificial intelligence and the impact of *All In*, the most ambitious comprehensive campaign in School history—illustrate how far we have come since the *Bulletin*'s inception in 1929.

But they also underscore how people and relationships are at the center of all that we do. This spring, we shine a spotlight on an alum who took the reins of his family's 400-year-old confectionery during the pandemic; a Tony-award winning producer; a hospital executive dedicated to service and building community; the retirements of eight long-serving Blair faculty and staff who have touched countless students' lives; and the triumph of former Blair basketball stars reunited at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Class Notes remain a critical point of connection, thanks to your contributions. Dr. Breed envisioned the *Bulletin* as a two-way "medium of exchange" between alums and the hilltop and that has certainly come to fruition over the last century. We hope the new layout makes it easier to stay informed about and in touch with former classmates and teachers.

Of course, we couldn't deliver on our mission without the extraordinary leadership, support and generosity of every member of the extended Blair family. We also look forward to sharing updates about campus and program additions and enhancements; the next issue of the *Bulletin* will detail the fall opening of our new Center for Health and Well-Being, our advanced curriculum as it enters its second year, summer work on Mason and Freeman Halls and Alumni Weekend festivities marking the incredible fundraising success of *All In*.

As we finalized the magazine's new look, I paged through *Bulletin* notes written by my predecessors over the years and came across a poignant reflection made by 14th Head of School Rev. Jim Kelley in 1983: "If the school is to have a future that is secure and responsive to the educational needs of future generations, then we must continue to have the support of those who, in some way, have been touched by the Blair experience." These sentiments couldn't be more true today; our strength and success would not be possible without your engagement and philanthropy and, for that, we are deeply grateful.





Peter G. Curran P'27 '27
Head of School

All Good Roads Lead to Blairstown

Bulletin Comments on Life at Blair in 1929

As Blair gives the *Blair Bulletin* an aesthetic refresh, we dug in the archives to see how the magazine has changed over the years from its first installment. In 1929, the periodical was four pages and included a column of Head of School Dr. Charles Breed's personal reflections on school operations and the need for a newsletter as an avenue for connecting those alums too far from campus to keep up-to-date on current hilltop happenings.

Volume 1, issue 1 is a fascinating read, and seeing the class years of '25 and '27 referenced is a little jarring, given those references were, of course, to 1925 and 1927 and not 2025 and 2027 as they are today. Readers at the time paid Blair dues, which went up from $1 to $2 after the introduction of the *Bulletin* to offset the cost of what was then a quarterly mailed offering.

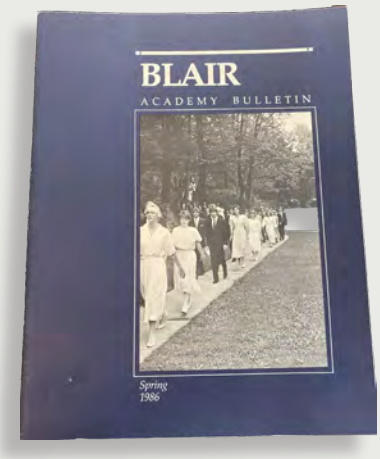
The *Bulletin* staff promised to "try to extricate [Dr. Breed] from his school duties and pin him down long enough to have him give you his impressions" of all areas of school life. In the first issue, he underscored the ways in which Blair delivered on its mission as an institution dedicated to college preparation, community, character, leadership and service. The publication also alluded to how much the School's name and reputation were bolstered by the ambassadorship of members of the Blair family: The year prior, Blair welcomed 100 new students, 70 of whom were recommended by alums or friends.


Blair Alumni Bulletin

CONTEST

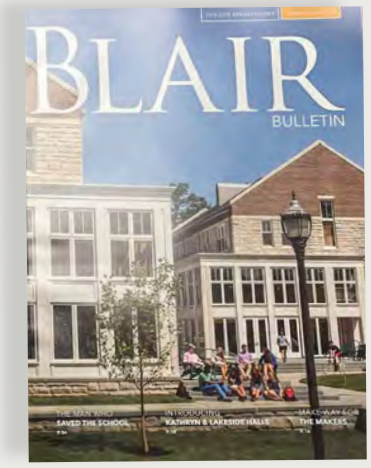
THE HEADMASTER'S CORNER

BLAIR HONOR MEN



In 1929, coverage included the highlights of a recent formal prom, held in the gymnasium—with bridge as an option for those "not inclined to strenuous diversion"—and two more informal dances, one of which took place in the Locke Hall reception rooms (which now serve as offices and a conference room). Over the weekend, West Hall was vacated so the guests of Blair's then all-male student body had a place to sleep for the weekend under the supervision of chaperones, and music was provided by a school jazz orchestra. Musical life at Blair seemed to be thriving, with a new Double Quartet recently being added to the Glee Club and a 10-piece orchestra taking the stage on campus in recent months.

Following a list of Blair graduates who had made the honor roll at Princeton, Yale, Syracuse and Penn State, other





stories updated readers on the Blair Academy Players, which were to stage a production of Eugene O'Neill's one-act play, *In the Zone* followed by a farce called *Town Hall Tonight*. A separate cast of faculty Players were set to stage the popular play *The Valiant* while the weekly *Blair Breeze* was also lauded for receiving an award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association for being the best paper published by a school of 350 or less the previous year.

Athletics took up three column inches with updates on the success of the wrestling, swimming, basketball and hockey teams. On the mat, Blair had won seven "bouts" against Newton, West

1929

FIRST *BLAIR BULLETIN* RELEASED

ISSUES PUBLISHED PER YEAR



PERSONAL REFLECTIONS BY HEAD OF SCHOOL DR. CHARLES BREED FEATURED IN EACH ISSUE



FIRST ISSUE CONTENT



PLAYING ON STAGE

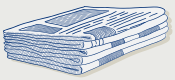
IN THE ZONE



PROM AT BLAIR

BLAIR SWIMMERS EARN 3RD PLACE IN STATE CHAMPIONSHIP





THE BLAIR BREEZE WINS AWARD FOR BEST PAPER PUBLISHED BY A SCHOOL OF 350 OR LESS

"The clew to success in a business enterprise is not so much the statistics on a balance sheet as the endorsement of its customers. The most accurate barometer of a school is the loyalty and support of its alumni….I hope that the Alumni *Bulletin* may become a medium of exchange renewing from time to time memories which go back to the happiest days of all of our lives."

— excerpted from the first Blair Bulletin Head of School note written by Dr. Charles Breed

Point plebes, Lehigh and Columbia frosh, George School, Perkiomen and Franklin & Marshall Prep. In the pool, the Bucs had just received third place in a state championship competition; Blair athletes put forth their best effort on the court and on the ice, although, due to a warm winter, the hockey team was held back by a lack of ice.

Class Notes has certainly grown since the *Bulletin*'s start, as the inaugural issue only included news from nine Blair classes, whereas that section spans 20-plus pages of news from 80 years of Blair grads today. The issue also touted a revamp of Blair's admission catalog and asked readers to share it with prospective families.

Noting that Blair's campus is most beautiful in the spring and asking alums to submit news about themselves or classmates along with their dues, the first *Bulletin* encouraged those who "wish to renew their acquaintance with [Blair] and old friends….[to] know that all good roads lead to Blairstown."

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Leo Li '25 Experiments with Success in the Lab & Kitchen

Senior Leo Li '25 brings his passions to life at the intersection of science and art. When he's not conducting research in the labs of the Bogle Science Center, he's excelling in the culinary arts—crafting Instagram-worthy dishes for Blair's student-run Lords by the Lake restaurant, perfecting croissant recipes in his California kitchen or, somehow, creating epicurean masterpieces in the West Hall dormitory. With graduation quickly approaching, Leo plans to continue blending his talents by pursuing a degree in nutritional science.

Leo's interest in scientific research has already led to a published article in the *International Journal of High School Research* and the *Curieux Academic Journal*. Under the expert tutelage of Dr. Nadia Abascal, Director of Integrated Science Research (ISR) at Blair, Leo's ISR project focused on viruses that specifically target and kill bacteria that cause tooth decay. Throughout his study, he sampled canine saliva to find a virus that would attack the bacteria and studied how the bacteria grew in various conditions.

"My work would not have been possible without Dr. Abascal's patience, invaluable guidance and expertise in the lab," Leo says. "Her mentorship helped advance my research further with innovative ways to collect samples and analyze data. It's a lot of hours in the lab, but Dr. Abascal brings the class together to support one another to succeed."

With his ISR project complete, Leo returned to the lab as an intern outside of Blair, where he is now researching in his dream field—nutritional science. He is assisting in research that studies amino acids and how they affect the growth of cancer cells. In the simplest terms, the study aims to determine if a high-protein diet increases cellular aging, which in turn increases tumor aggressiveness.

"Certain diets can affect tumor growth and progression," Leo explains. "I hope to one day bring my interest in cooking to the lab to create the recipes for the diets we study."

Leo remembers his dad in the kitchen concocting recipes when he was young, but he doesn't think that's where his cooking inspiration began. It wasn't until he began making ramen in an electric cooker in West Hall to his friends' delight that he began to wonder, "What else can I create in West?" Trips to Dale's Market ensued, and soon Leo was fielding orders from adjoining rooms to whip up a new recipe during study hall each week. At home on breaks, Leo calculates he has baked at least 200 croissants, experimenting with his recipe to reach perfection.





"Croissants are my favorite to make," Leo shares. "In my first 15 attempts, I didn't get it right. I was experimenting with temperatures, ingredients and other changing variables. It's rewarding at the end to bake a piece you like. Cooking is an art."

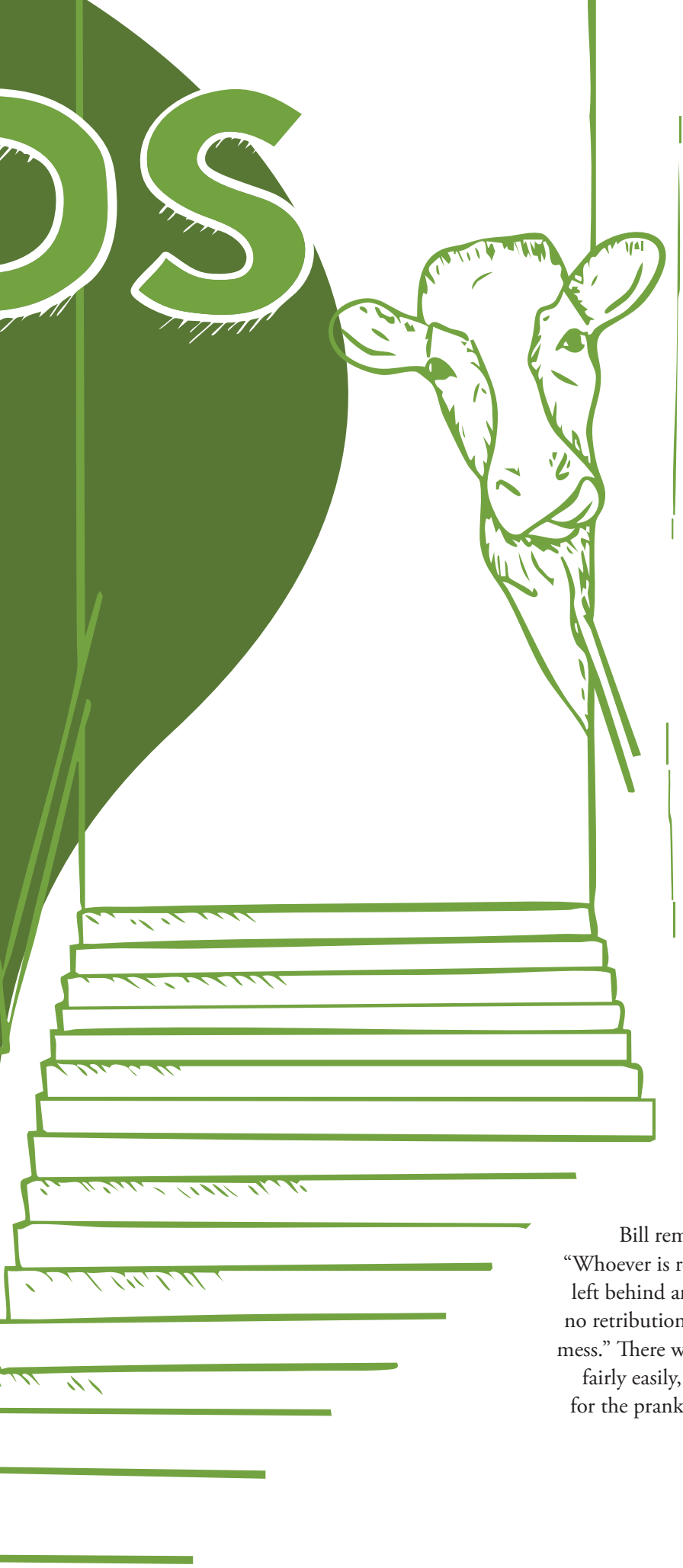
Leo's art was on display this spring at Blair's Lords by the Lake, a student-run restaurant that serves the Blair community out of language teachers Maria and Allan Issenchmidts' kitchen, a kindness for which Leo and his fellow restaurateurs are endlessly grateful. Leo loves the teamwork that makes Lords so successful, despite the behind-the-scenes chaos.

"It's not like the real restaurants where staff are ranked," Leo clarifies. "It teaches us about working together; teamwork is key."

As Leo prepares to graduate, he reflects on the journey that has shaped his passions and future aspirations. From late-night culinary experiments in West Hall to groundbreaking research in nutritional science, his unique ability to blend creativity with discipline sets him apart. Leo's next chapter promises to be just as dynamic as his time at Blair, as he plans to further explore the connections between diet, health and science in college. Whether he's in the lab studying amino acids or in the kitchen perfecting his croissants, Leo is determined to keep pushing boundaries—one recipe and one experiment at a time.

LEGEND & LORE OF BLAIR

With a history that stretches back more than 177 years, Blair is a community with a colorful and storied past. Some of those stories are firmly rooted in fact, carefully recorded in the School's archives, while others have evolved over time, with details changing depending on the person telling the tale. Many of us stumble on these stories in the most unexpected places—a Chapel Talk, a snippet overheard at lunch or an aside in class from faculty who swear they were there. We've all heard the whispers—the filming of *Friday the 13th*, the explosion that occurred after war artifacts were removed from a dorm or the remarkable 40-foot pine tree that took up residence in Mason Hall one Christmas. Have you ever felt the hairs on the back of your neck rise as you walked Locke's darkened halls at night? Perhaps it's just the wind—or perhaps it's something more. We dug deep into the archives and teamed up with the School's historians and storytellers to bring you just a few of the legends and lore that have withstood the test of time at Blair.



The Curious Incident of the Cows

"We have a problem" crackled over the loudspeaker during breakfast announcements. It was Assistant Headmaster Ferd Marcial, Hon. '39, and Bill Wildrick, Class of 1963, quietly chuckled to himself. Bill recalled the previous night's escapade, when several members of his class had herded a couple of cows from the nearby Cook dairy farm up two flights of stairs to the Clinton Study Hall, locking them in for the night.

Bill remembers Assistant Headmaster Marcial's next instruction: "Whoever is responsible, please bring a shovel to clean up the cow pies left behind and return the cows to their rightful owners. There will be no retribution if you come immediately after breakfast to clean up this mess." There was just one small problem. The cows had walked upstairs fairly easily, but coaxing them back down proved quite the challenge for the pranksters. "That gave the facility the last laugh," Bill says, still grinning at the memory.

The Ghost of Locke



In the hallowed halls of Locke, an unsettling tradition has lingered for decades, shrouded in whispers and shadows. According to English teacher and Dean of Campus Life Carolyn Conforti-Browse '79, "It has been an unofficial tradition since the 1970s for the Locke dorm heads to invent stories about the Ghost of Locke." Mrs. Conforti-Browse, when she was head of the dorm, breathed life into the tale, dubbing the mischievous spirit "Dora," who hid out on vacations and kidnapped faculty cats. "If I ever wanted to startle students late at night, I would just meow," she recalls. The story took on a darker tone a few years later when history teacher Andrew Sykes arrived. Late at night, students began finding ominous messages like "I'm here" typed on the dorm's computer screens, seemingly left by an unseen hand. But, in 2011, English department chair Jim Moore, Hon. '93, sent the myth into the realm of pure legend, delivering a Chapel Talk that is still whispered about more than a decade later.

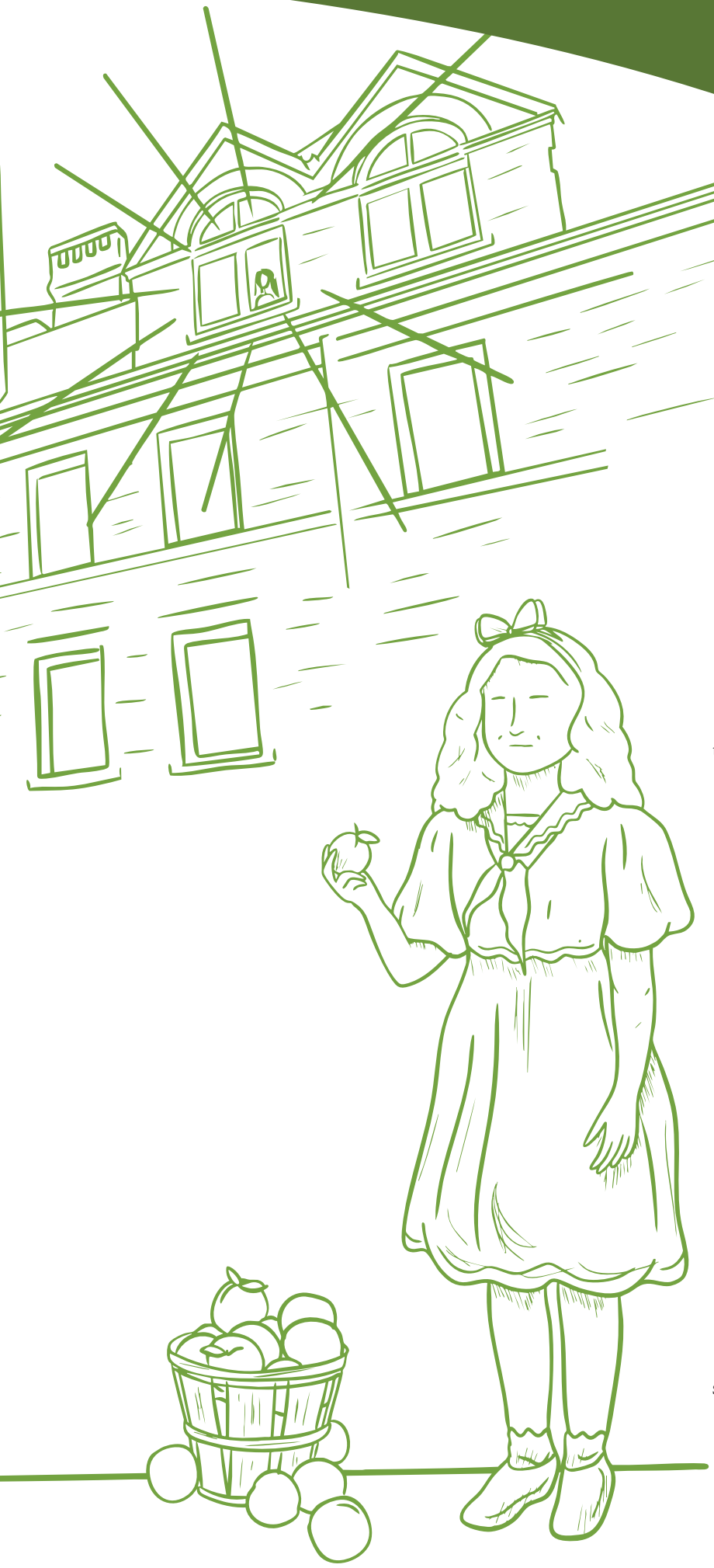
Blending pieces of real Blair history with hints of the supernatural, Mr. Moore spun a fantastical tale, introducing the specter as a girl named Jenny McGraw. "She confines her daytime activities to the Locke attic," Mr. Moore told the rapt audience, "but, at night, she descends into the halls where you sleep, making her presence known." With deliberate pauses, he continued, "What I didn't know until recently is why she haunts Locke Hall—moving objects, messing with electricity and, as I've heard but not witnessed, leaving messages on computers."

Those present that day recall that the tension in the room was palpable. "You could have heard a pin drop," fellow English teacher Craig Evans recalls. Students sat wide-eyed, hanging on every word, until Mr. Moore leaned forward and asked in a quiet voice, "You know how this story ends, right?" Well, we won't ruin the ending here, either, but needless to say, no one slept in Locke Hall that night.

The story of the Ghost of Locke, a playful fiction created by teachers, has now become a favorite tradition at Blair that continues to captivate students to this day. This year, senior Minh Anh Vo '25 asked Mr. Moore to recount the infamous Chapel Talk to the ninth and tenth graders living in Locke. The consummate showman, he kindly obliged, but only, of course, in the dim glow of Locke's attic lights.

Mr. Moore understands, he thinks, why this story has stood the test of time. "In a world increasingly dominated by screens, we are looking for collective experiences that bind us," he says. "Being part of Blair means being part of a much larger story. So many people come back after they've graduated because they understand they are part of the story. The Ghost of Locke is about inviting students to be part of the legend."

Long live the legend of the Ghost of Locke. May she roam the halls eternally, waiting for the next generation of unwitting students to discover her….



Ghost of Insley

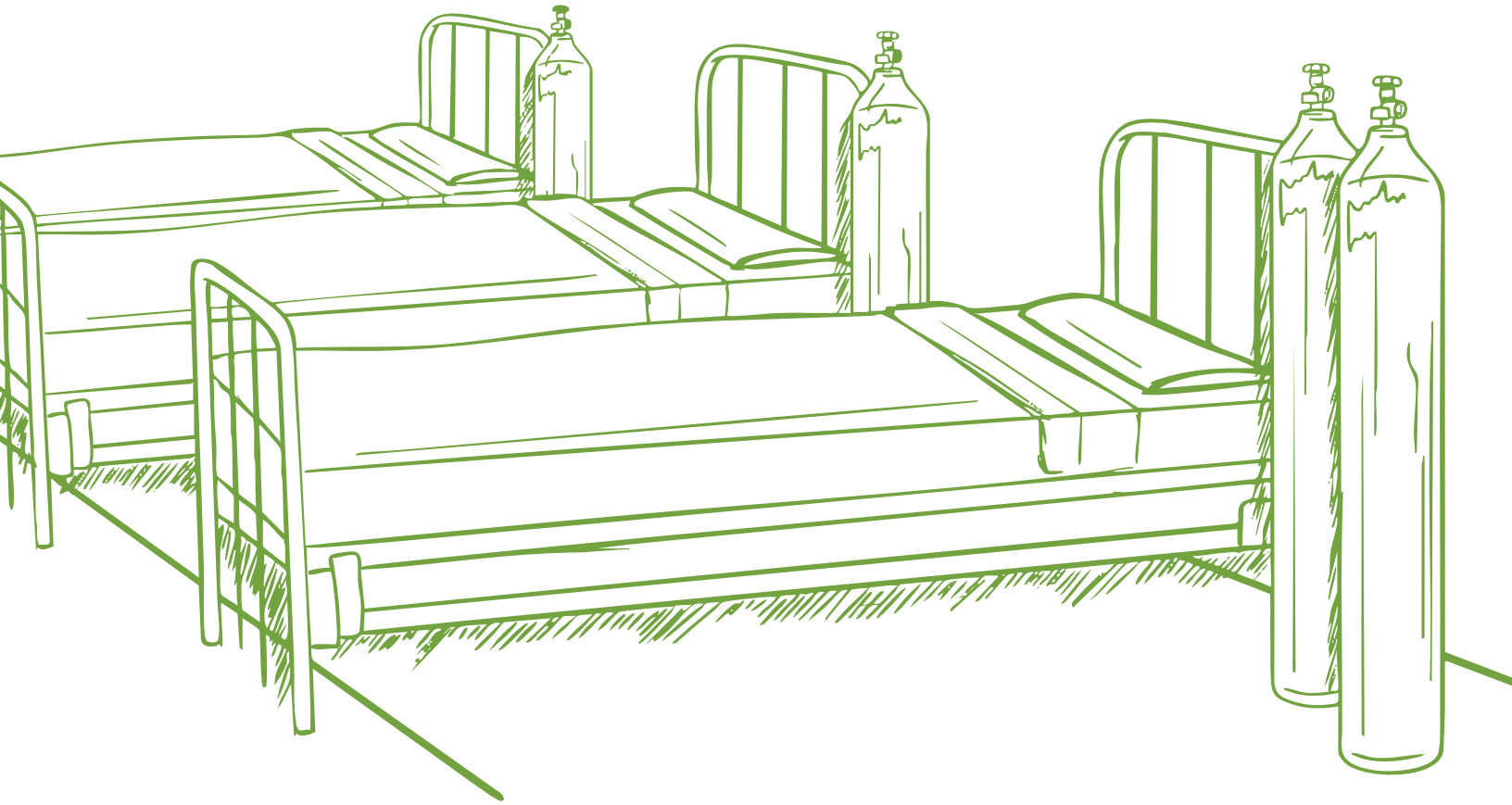
While the ghost of Locke Hall may be nothing more than colorful fiction, Mr. Evans insists that a very real spirit haunts Insley Hall. "She's a little girl in a white dress," says Mr. Evans, who has taught English and theatre at Blair for 31 years. "She always appears in the basement of Insley."

Over the years, members of Blair's food service team have reported eerie encounters with the mysterious figure. Dining hall server Lisa Voelker, who has worked at Blair for 23 years, hasn't seen the girl herself, but she has experienced unsettling happenings—peaches rolling off shelves without explanation and the bathroom door handle in the basement of Insley mysteriously jiggling. "I watched the handle move, thinking someone might be stuck inside," Lisa recalls. "But when I opened the door, no one was there."

Multiple food service employees have claimed to catch glimpses of the girl over the years. "The former head of food services saw her," Mr. Evans confirms. "We were good friends, but he refused to talk about it."

The story gained more credibility last year when a delivery worker, unaffiliated with Blair, dropped off supplies in the basement and then asked the unsettling question: "Who is the girl down there?"

To this day, no one knows who she is…or why she lingers.



Davies Escapes Disaster

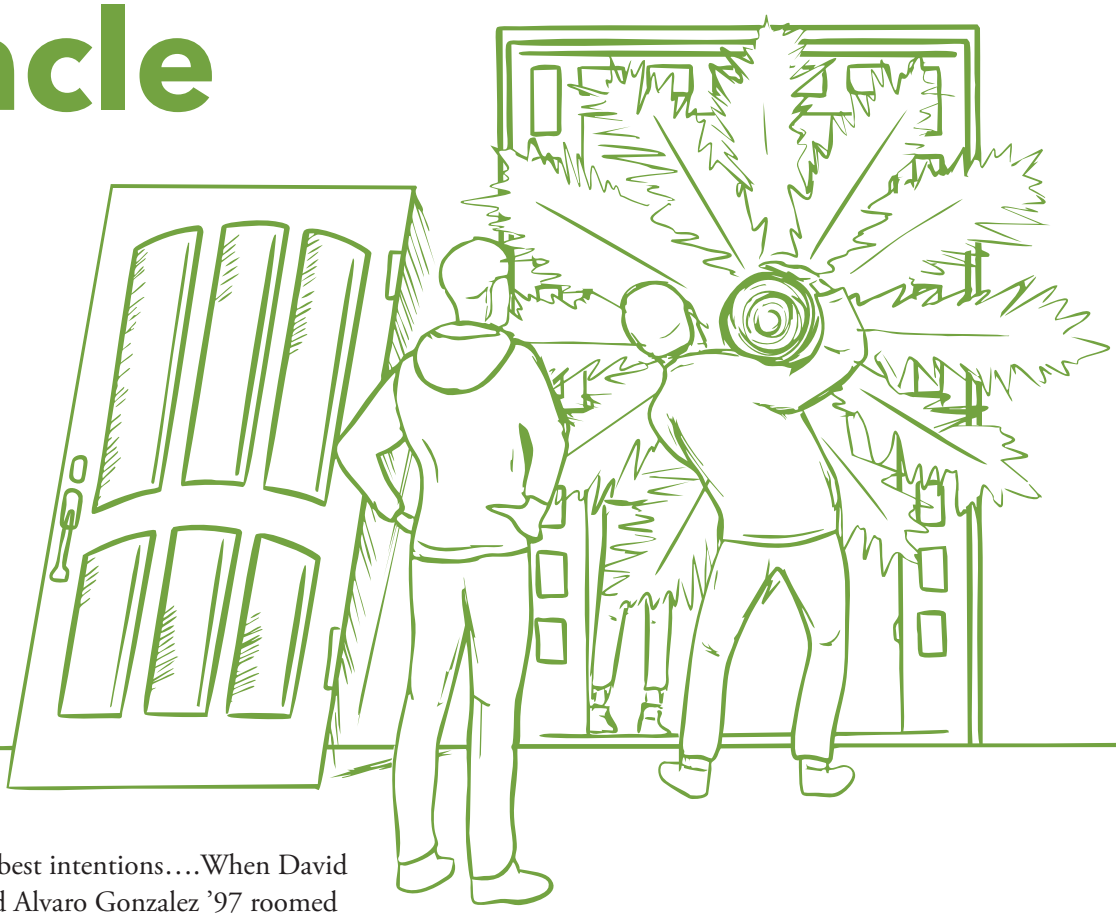
There is an old saying that truth is stranger than fiction, and that is certainly the case with the story of exploding nuclear fallout supplies once stored at Blair.

According to an account in the April 1990 edition of *The Blair Breeze*, "In the late 1950s, during the Eisenhower administration, Blair agreed to store a 200-bed civil defense hospital in the basement of Locke and Davies Halls, a precaution taken in order to protect the school and the town in the event of nuclear fallout. Items stored in the two basements included tanks of oxygen gas and nitrous oxide, bottles of ether, an emergency generator, 200 beds and several water purification chemicals."

Concerned about potential problems associated with long-term storage, Blair business manager Harry Pittman reached out to Warren County's Civil Defense coordinator in early 1990, asking to remove the items. Blairstown Mayor Walter Orcutt, along with the town's road department, helped facilitate the removal, placing the material outside of Blairstown's water treatment plant. Mayor Orcutt was quoted in *The Blair Breeze*, stating, "I figured that since part of what had to be stored was a water treatment chemical, then it wouldn't be a bad idea to store it in a water treatment plant." However, just over an hour after being moved, the items exploded, triggering a fire that sent flames shooting into the sky and startling the town's residents. Local firefighter Jerry Stoddart recalls the incident and says, to the best of his knowledge, "When they had a fire in the building, it was the oxygen bottles that blew up."

Fortunately, no one was injured, but the blast disabled the town's water purification system for a period of two weeks.

The Christmas Tree Debacle



Blair students often have the best intentions….When David Cruz ’98, John Rocco ’98 and Alvaro Gonzalez ’97 roomed together in Mason Hall, they felt strongly that the all-boys dorm could use a little more unity. So, they approached Mrs. Conforti-Browse, the dorm head, with an ambitious plan to raise everyone’s spirits: They would throw a holiday party and decorate a Christmas tree themselves. “They thought it would be a great bonding event,” Mrs. Conforti-Browse recalls. The plan? “The entire dorm would venture out on the golf course together and, with faculty supervision, cut down a tree, with each student taking a ceremonial swing.”

The group of roughly two dozen boys set their plan in motion, and in true teenage fashion, decided it would be more fun to carry out this adventure at midnight. So, in the dead of night, they trudged through the snow and successfully cut down the largest tree they could find—a magnificent 40-foot pine. “Unfortunately,” Mrs. Conforti-Browse recalls with a laugh, “no one had thought about how to get a 40-foot tree into Mason.”

At 2 a.m., after carrying the towering pine down Route 94, the group decided the best way to get the tree into the dorm intact would be to remove the dorm’s front door. Once inside, the bigger issue became how to secure the tree. Fortunately, one of the dorm’s occupants was a whiz at outdoor skills. “He pulled out a grappling hook and with a heave-ho, they used a pulley to tie that tree to the railing. They did bond over it,” she recalls, chuckling. “It was a crazy bonding experience.”



The Peddie Newspaper

The long list of pranks pulled by Blair students in honor of Peddie Day could easily fill a book. In the 1940s, students left their mark by painting "BEAT PEDDIE" in large letters on the water tower in the center of campus. Fifty years later, one of the more unusual traditions involved "kidnapping" an administrator on the eve of the big event. In years past, both 15th Head of School T. Chandler Hardwick III and former Dean of Academics Sam Bacon found themselves at the mercy of Blair seniors.

Then there was the time that Blair students "stole" the four children of English teacher Tom Parauda and "gave them back" during a School Meeting. "That was a lot of fun," Mr. Parauda recalls good-naturedly. For the safety of Blair's current faculty children, we won't delve too deeply in that one knowing it was all in good fun, but Mr. Parauda does have quite the story to tell.

Another particularly epic prank came courtesy of Edward Tirpack '13, who, as a student, managed to secure a plane and fly over the Peddie soccer game, dropping rubber chickens attached to makeshift parachutes onto the field below.

No accounting of Peddie Day would be complete without the unforgettable story of Vikram Mansharamani '92, aka "Vinnie Spitoli." Donning a gray pinstripe suit, black shirt and heavy gold chains, Vikram devised an elaborate scheme to convince Peddie's Director of Admission Peter Quinn (who went on to become Head of School) that he was a student in need of a postgraduate year. Under the guise of "Vinnie," a character straight out of *The Sopranos*, Vikram scored an interview and, with camera in hand, spent a lovely day touring the Hightstown campus.

Once back at Blair, Vikram, with the help of a few friends and English teacher Andy Hay, whipped up a mock edition of the Peddie School newspaper. "We printed 1,000 copies, drove down to Peddie the night before Peddie Day and distributed copies to everyone," he recalls. The paper was packed with photos Vikram had snapped the day of his tour, along with dozens of outrageous articles, including one announcing "Mr. Quinn…to Leave Peddie This January" and a heartfelt goodbye to Mr. Quinn from the one and only "Vinnie Spitoli."

In an ironic twist, Vikram even persuaded the good-natured Mr. Quinn to write him a letter of recommendation to the college of his choice. Remarkably, it worked—Vikram got into Yale University, and this legendary prank earned its place in the annals of Blair history.



The Filming of *Friday the 13th*

No collection of the legends and lore of Blair would be complete without noting that every year, hundreds of fans from near and far swarm the streets of Blairstown on one day: Friday the 13th. They gather to celebrate the infamous horror movie, filmed in and around the town in the fall of 1979. The movie's opening scenes show landmarks familiar to all of us at Blair: Roy's Hall, the theatre on Main Street, followed by shots of the Blairstown Diner and the Moravian Cemetery in nearby Hope. Many Blairstown locals know the details, like the fact that the town fire company supplied water to create the film's rainy scenes and that a Blairstown Police car makes a cameo appearance.

What many do not know, however, is that on the day of filming, many of Blair's seniors skipped class and descended en masse downtown in an effort to secure spots as extras. Mrs. Conforti-Browse '79 recalls the day. "I think the only Blair resident who actually got into the movie was the Washburn's dog [former teachers Andy and Cathy Washburn]. It was a big disappointment."

That has not stopped the phenomenon from catching on, though. The local community has embraced the film's legacy, rolling out memorabilia and offering official tours and movie showings at Roy's Hall, which still stands today, just as it did in the film. Don't be surprised to see mobs of fans wandering the town the next Friday the 13th, some dressed as Jason Voorhees, the villain in a hockey mask. And, if you're lucky, you might spot a Blair student or two. English teacher Craig Evans, who often teaches a horror elective, even gives extra credit to students who manage to snap a photo with Jason.



INTRODUCING *WAGASHI* TO THE WORLD

Mitsuharu “Mitsu” Kurokawa ’03

In the summer of 2021, Mitsuharu "Mitsu" Kurokawa '03 stood at his office window, taking in the shimmering expanse of Tokyo and reflecting on his new role as president of Toraya Confectionery, an organization founded in the early 16th century in Kyoto. Toraya had crafted *wagashi*, the traditional sweets served to the Japanese imperial family and essential to seasonal celebrations in their rituals for more than 400 years. In that time, leadership at Toraya had passed with ease from one generation of the Kurokawa family to the next; in 2020, Mitsuharu's father stepped down after nearly three decades at the helm, entrusting the company to his then 35-year-old son. Now, as the 18th-generation president, Mitsu faced the formidable task of continuing the family's legacy while growing the business and navigating the upheaval of a pandemic quickly sweeping the globe.

Toraya Confectionery's story dates back to Kyoto during the reign of Emperor Go-Yōzei, which began in 1586. "For most of the company's history, Toraya made sweets primarily for the royal family, used in their rituals throughout the year," Mitsu notes. These delicacies included *namagashi*, intricately crafted desserts often used in tea ceremonies. Namagashi are crafted by artisans from fresh, natural ingredients and inspired by the seasons and nature. The company also made *mochi* rice sweets, and *manju*, steamed buns bursting with filling. During the Edo period, Toraya received orders for manju to be sent from renowned feudal lords to the emperor and court nobility.

Toraya's business thrived as it continued to serve the royal family and feudal lords. However, the end of the Edo period was a time of political upheaval in Japan, and the relocation of the capital from Kyoto to Tokyo in 1869 proved a major turning point for Toraya. Toraya moved its main operations there as well, keeping its Kyoto shop as it was. The shop relocated several times before finally settling into its present location in Akasaka, Tokyo, in 1964. Today, in addition to continuing to serve as an official purveyor to the imperial family, Toraya operates 80 stores across Japan and one in Paris.

Blair Academy Beckons

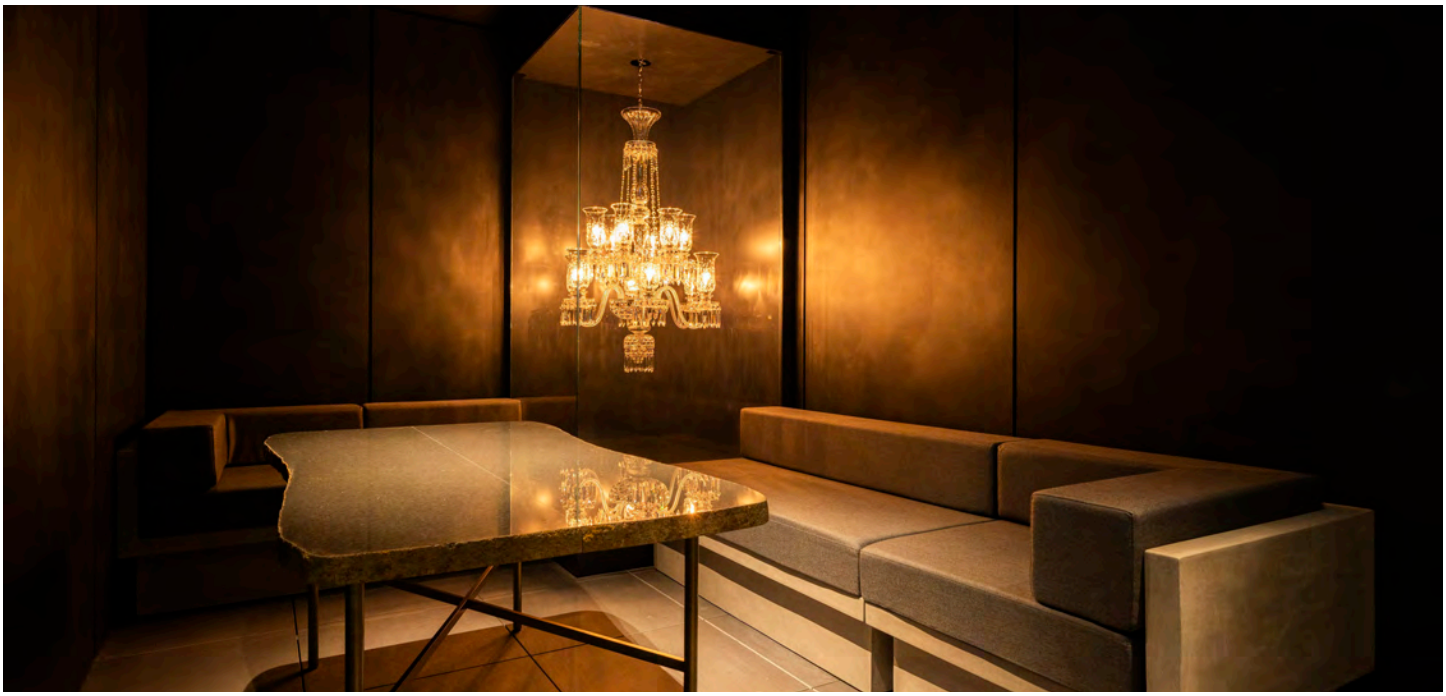
When Mitsu took the helm of the company in 2020, he found himself facing a set of challenges as intricate as the company's history, but Mitsu was long used to dealing with challenges. Arriving at Blair as a sophomore in the fall of 2001, he experienced living abroad for the first time. His mother's cousin, Toshihiro Matsuo '88, had attended Blair and recommended it. "Blair represented a huge cultural difference for me," Mitsu recalls. "I had the experience of going outside my boundaries and meeting people from different cultures." Mitsu describes his Blair years as some of the most impactful of his life. He gained confidence in his ability to survive in a challenging environment and the invaluable experience of living in an unfamiliar culture with different rules and expectations.

A handful of mentors made a profound difference to him at Blair. English teacher Robert Cooke guided Mitsu through the complexities of the English language with kindness and humor, and he discovered a love for ceramics with art teacher Philip Homes. He admired the structured approach of science teacher Rick Clarke, PhD, in physics class, and the rigor of Latta Browse's Calculus BC, where he learned alongside students from all over the world. These experiences, he says, laid the foundation for his ability to connect with ease with diverse people. "After Blair, I went to Babson College and met my wife, and now I have great friends from around the world. Because I went to Blair, it was easy to communicate with them and I got a better understanding of different worlds."

After college, Mitsu returned to Japan with one thought in mind: to work for Toraya. "It was my dream," he says simply. "Toraya is as much a part of my identity as being Japanese." After spending three years immersing himself in Toraya's manufacturing operations, first at a company factory and then as a pâtissier in the company's Paris boutique, he moved into a management role.



A historic photograph from 1925 featuring the Toraya staff alongside the Kurokawa family, the owners, proudly standing in front of their store.



St. Louis Bar by Kei, where three-star chef Kei Kobayashi collaborates with the French crystal artisan, Saint-Louis.

Challenges & Innovations

Now, as the company's president, Mitsu is committed to enhancing product quality and evolving to appeal to modern audiences—all while carefully preserving the brand's iconic, luxury image. Mitsu sees huge potential in wagashi, noting that the sweet's plant-derived ingredients make them a healthy alternative that could gain a global following, much like sushi. "Twenty or 30 years ago, not so many people outside of Japan ate sushi. But, over time, people learned to know it and love it. I believe in 10 or 20 years, the world will experience the taste of Japanese sweets."

To help him explore the possibilities, in 2021, Toraya was introduced to Harvard Business School with a case study written by professor Lauren H. Cohen. Business students studied the company's legacy and debated strategies for global expansion, considering detailed issues like the quality of *azuki* beans—essential for Toraya's popular sweet called *yokan*—which are often inferior when grown outside of Japan. "The professor invites me to attend the final presentation of the semester," he says. "It is always interesting to hear their ideas."

Fortunately, the future looks bright for Toraya. Although the company experienced a sales downturn and closed a few stores during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mitsu is pleased to share that the company has made a strong recovery. "The last two years have been the best in our entire sales history," he proudly reports. This success has come from strategic cost-cutting measures that never sacrificed the fresh, natural ingredients that make wagashi delicious. Another factor has been the company's high-profile partnerships. Since 2021, Mitsu has operated a joint restaurant in Gotemba, where the Toraya factory resides, with Kei Kobayashi, the first Japanese chef to earn three Michelin stars in French cuisine in Paris. "We also recently partnered with Saint-Louis, the crystal-ware company started in 1596 and owned by Hermès, to open a bar in Ginza, Tokyo," he adds.



Pictured here are wagashi, the traditional Japanese sweets inspired by the four seasons.



Illustrated wagashi design books created during the Edo period (1603-1867).



A tiered box, crafted in 1698, used for delivering wagashi.

Looking back, Mitsu remains deeply grateful for the experiences that have shaped him, especially his time at Blair. "Blair impacted my life so much," he recalls. "It was one of the best decisions I've ever made." And, of course, he hopes that any Blair friends visiting Japan or Paris will stop by one of Toraya's shops to experience the artistry of wagashi firsthand. But, with so many exquisite options, which one should they try first? "Namagashi," Mitsu says without hesitation, "the fresh sweets handcrafted every day. They are our signature."



Each sweet is handcrafted by wagashi artisans.

Looking Ahead

When Mitsu looks at his own three young children now, he envisions a day when they, too, might take the reins at Toraya, continuing the family tradition that has flourished for more than four centuries. In a country that is home to 33,000 businesses more than a century old, many of which are family-owned, Mitsu recognizes that Toraya's endurance is tied to a deep-rooted respect in Japan for tradition and prioritizing quality. "At Toraya, we are not focused on maximizing sales or profits at any cost," he explains. "Our priority is providing something unique: an amazing and high-quality product."

Mitsu hopes the next generation will embrace these values, holding fast to Toraya's mission: to make the finest sweets possible. "This principle was set by our ancestors, and it will continue to be our guide," he affirms. And so, as he looks forward, Mitsu is determined to balance Toraya's heritage while also sharing the art of wagashi with the world. It is a vision of balance and purpose, and Mitsu plans to deliver it—one exquisitely crafted sweet at a time.

Around the Arch



From left to right: Odafe Oweh ’18, Sanoussi Kane ’20, Blair Athletic Trainer Brad Strauss and David Ojabo ’19 pose after the Ravens win.



Blair Cheers Baltimore Ravens to Victory

The usual sea of Ravens purple had a touch of Blair blue last fall as 16 excited students descended on M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore. After a random drawing from those interested to determine the roster, a fan bus, driven by Head of School Peter G. Curran, left Blair on an early Sunday morning, bound for Charm City. They were there for more than just a Ravens victory over the Washington Commanders—they came to cheer on Blair alums Odafe Oweh '18, David Ojabo '19 and Sanoussi Kane '20, who have made their mark on the NFL.

In an amazing show of Blair pride and support, Odafe—an outside linebacker in his fourth year with the Ravens—worked with Assistant Director of Annual Giving Kristine Scialla to generously offer Blair students the opportunity to attend the game as his guests. Before kickoff, Odafe made his way on the field as team captain for the coin toss, taking center stage on the jumbotron to the cheers of his Blair family looking on. During the nail-biting 30-23 win, Odafe recorded a tackle, adding to his 14 combined tackles and 3.5 sacks for the season. Third-year linebacker David and rookie safety Sanoussi supported their team for the Ravens' fourth win of the season, helping to strengthen their lead in the AFC North.

"I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity that Blair presented to me years ago," Odafe explained. "I started my football journey there and it's always important to remember where you began and give back. Who knows, some Blair kid can be inspired by the game, and just like that you ignite someone's drive to pursue something."

Joining in on the Blair-Baltimore connection was Ravens fan and alum Quinn McKay '11, who happened to be in attendance for the game and swung by the "Blair family" section to reunite with Director of Alumni Relations Courtnay Stanford '95 and Mrs. Scialla.

"It's great to see the student activities at Blair growing and thriving," Quinn said. "I love how the Blair community continues to unite alumni through activities in different cities, especially being able to support three Blair alumni playing for the Baltimore Ravens!"

After the game, students gathered for a meet-and-greet with the Blair players who were in their shoes not too long ago. The alums took the time to sign dozens of autographs, pose for photos and chat with the current students—including many current Blair football players—about their time at Blair and their careers after leaving the hilltop. Students were treated to Ravens swag bags as well, with fun gear to commemorate the exciting day.



JuJu Anderson ’25, left, and Odafe Oweh ’18 chat about their shared experiences with Blair football.

“It was really cool to see people in the position that I dream to be in and a blessing to get to talk with them after the game and hear a little bit of their journey and advice they had for me,” noted JuJu Anderson ’25, who has committed to playing football at the University of Pittsburgh in the fall as a defensive end, the same position as Odafe and David.

“This was an amazing experience and I am so thankful to have gone,” Evie Holleman ’27 shared. “Meeting the players was a phenomenal way to interact with so many more people and expand my horizons. That was probably one of the best days of my life.”

Fellow Buc Toby Curran ’27 echoed his classmates’ sentiments, saying, “It was amazing seeing how kids in the same position as us at Blair put in a lot of time and work on the football field and ended up making it to the NFL, playing in front of hundreds of thousands of fans.”

The occasion was also a sweet reunion for Head Athletic Trainer Brad Strauss, who trained all three players during their time at Blair. Mr. Curran and Mr. Strauss were met with massive hugs from the football titans, and it was all laughs and smiles as the crew reunited and swapped stories.

“To see them fulfilling their dreams of playing in the NFL is remarkable, especially knowing they are doing it together,” Mr. Strauss said. “I am thankful to be part of their journey, and being there to celebrate this win with them felt like a full circle moment.” At the meet-and-greet, Sanoussi asked Mr. Strauss if his quote about feeding your dreams in order to achieve them was still up in the training room at Blair, and he was happy to share that it was. “I am so proud that they keep feeding their dreams and reaching their goals,” Mr. Strauss added.

As Odafe, David and Sanoussi gear up for another season, the Blair community will be watching, cheering and ready for another unforgettable moment from the Ravens trio we fondly remember as Bucs.

“I’m hoping this will have a shift in the pride and the resources put into Blair football,” Odafe remarked, “because you never know whose life you could be changing.”



Arts



Fall in Love with the Arts at Blair

Creativity flourished last fall as Blair's performing artists took center stage to share their talents with the Blair community. The Blair Academy Players' rendition of *Clue: On Stage (High School Version)* had audiences watching with bated breath to uncover whodunit before the next victim met their untimely demise. Before Thanksgiving break, the entire community gathered to hear the captivating notes of the Blair Academy Singers and instrumental ensembles as they shared the repertoire they had been expertly rehearsing for months. It was a moment of gratitude for the community as they came together to celebrate the arts at Blair.

Murder's on the Menu in *Clue: On Stage*

Darkness descended, tension built and, soon enough, audiences were on the edge of their seats—because at the Wean Studio Theatre last fall the only thing on the menu was murder. Based on the beloved Hasbro board game CLUE and the eponymous Paramount Pictures movie, *Clue: On Stage (High School Version)* is a subversive comedy whodunit that had audiences roaring as they tried to uncover "who did it, where and with what!" Adapted from the screenplay by Jonathan Lynn and written by Sandy Rustin, with additional material by Hunter Foster and Eric Price, this farce/murder mystery followed the motley crew of mysterious dinner guests—Wadsworth, Miss Scarlet, Professor Plum, Mrs. White, Mr. Green, Mrs. Peacock and Colonel Mustard—as they raced to find the killer before they were next!

"The twists and turns in this play were like nothing I've been a part of before," student director Ev Rutt '26 noted. "The audience was constantly trying to connect the dots and predict what would happen next."

Like Ev, many of the Blair Academy Players agreed that working with the cast was the best part of the production. This year's play carried an extra layer of emotion, with five graduating seniors, many of whom had participated in several productions. "The Players are my family. They are some of the best people I know," Eli Maloney '25, who played Wadsworth, shared. "The set felt like a second home."

The intimate setting of the Wean Studio Theatre, known as the Black Box, enhanced

the show's suspenseful atmosphere. "It felt like the audience was part of the mystery," said Cat Zhang '26, who portrayed Yvette. With its close quarters and clever lighting, the space drew everyone into the action—especially when a cast member let out a scream that echoed through the seats, like Stella Baceda '25's spine-chilling shrieks as Mrs. Peacock.

"Everyone brought such great energy to their role," added Penny Wardwell '27, who was cast as the dinner party host, Mr. Boddy. "It was a fantastic ensemble cast."



Inspiration Strikes at Blair's Fall Concert

For centuries, inspiration has sparked creativity in unexpected ways. For today's Blair musicians, there is no telling when or where inspiration will strike, but one thing is for sure. When it came to this year's Fall Concert in November, the performers were ready.

For the Blair Academy Singers, inspiration came in the form of Head of School Peter G. Curran's opening remarks at Convocation—be curious and suspend judgment—one of the Five Fundamentals of the School. Director of Vocal Music Ryan Manni-Brennan explained that the choir used Mr. Curran's advice to pick the fall and spring concert themes, selecting "Be curious" up first. Musical selections from all over the globe, from Norway to Indonesia, demonstrated the Singers' curiosity throughout the concert.

"This concert had pieces that make you think about the dialect and emotional journey of the song, even if it wasn't in English," senior singer Cheyenne Joachim '25 shared. "If I was to give this concert an emotion, it would be anticipation because audiences were on the edge of their seats."

Anticipation for this fall's concert was also building for cellist and composer Ben Lo '25, who premiered his "Symphony in C Minor." Drawing inspiration from favorite composers like Tchaikovsky and John Williams, Ben crafted an ambitious orchestral work with the help of Director of Instrumental Music Jennifer Pagotto.



"This experience meant a lot to me, not only as a student but also as a musician," Ben noted. "Being able to perform my own piece in front of hundreds of my peers was a very rare experience, and I am grateful for Mrs. Pagotto, who has guided me along the way. This was also a major step in my musical journey, and I have experienced tremendous growth working with the orchestra."



Mrs. Pagotto was equally excited to debut Ben's piece, along with other music with gravitas the orchestra was exploring this year. Additionally, it was the first year the Advanced Jazz Combo collaborated—in addition to their work with the Jazz Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra—to explore several jazz standards that are quintessential to the genre and perform "All Blues" by Miles Davis at the concert.

Blair Perspectives in Focus

At the start of this academic year, photography teacher and Director of School Photography Tyson Trish invited students to participate in a Fall Shootout photo competition. Bucs were encouraged to capture the magic of autumn through their own unique perspectives, resulting in a stunning collection of creative imagery. Early October brought a rare and awe-inspiring treat to northwestern New Jersey—the aurora borealis, or northern lights—adding vibrant greens, pinks and blues to the traditional harvest palette.

"The Fall Shootout always brings out the best in my students," Mr. Trish reflects. "It is inspiring to see them respond to the prompt in their unique ways. We live in such a beautiful area—especially in the fall—and I love seeing the world through my students' eyes."

After a record number of entries, Sam Kowalick '25 was awarded first place at School Meeting to thunderous applause, and Jack McCauley '26 captured a close second. The Fall Shootout not only showcased the talent and creativity of Blair's budding photographers but also highlighted the unique beauty of the season through the eyes of the Bucs.



Honorable Mention: Sophia Shah '25.



Fourth Place: Ricky Duan '27.



First Place: Sam Kowalick '25.



Fifth Place: Kate Brandt ’26.



Second Place: Jack McCauley ’26.



Honorable Mention: Davinn Cook ’25.

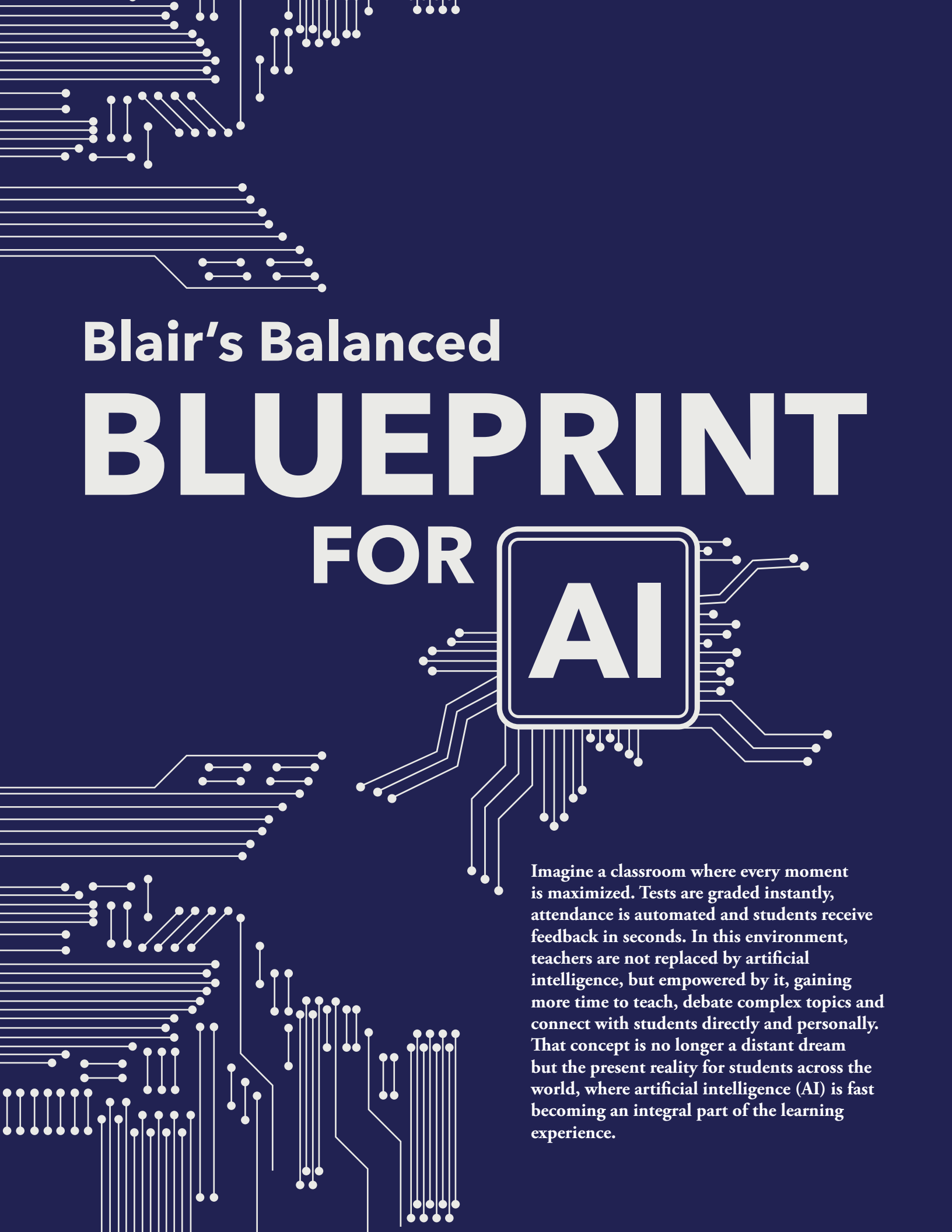


Honorable Mention: Vicky Ross ’25.



Third Place: Margaret Swift ’26.

Blair's Balanced BLUEPRINT FOR AI



Imagine a classroom where every moment is maximized. Tests are graded instantly, attendance is automated and students receive feedback in seconds. In this environment, teachers are not replaced by artificial intelligence, but empowered by it, gaining more time to teach, debate complex topics and connect with students directly and personally. That concept is no longer a distant dream but the present reality for students across the world, where artificial intelligence (AI) is fast becoming an integral part of the learning experience.

For Joe Wagner, Blair's Dean of Teaching and Learning, the arrival of tools like ChatGPT mark a watershed moment. "It's as if we're witnessing the dawn of the Internet again," Mr. Wagner observes. "Everyone is trying to figure out the impact of a technology that has exploded and is going to reshape the world of work."

He's not alone in that sentiment. Since its viral release in November 2022, ChatGPT has taken the world by storm. With more than 400 million users globally, including approximately half of the college students in the United States, ChatGPT has reshaped how the world interacts with information. Students can now draft essays, summarize readings and conduct research in seconds. Thanks to advancements in data processing, ChatGPT is also evolving at a staggering rate. OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, reports that the computational power of artificial intelligence has increased by an astounding 300,000 times in just six years, far surpassing the pace of growth in human cognitive capacity.

Recognizing AI's vast and growing influence, Blair has tasked Mr. Wagner, along with Assistant Head of School for Academics Nathan Molteni, with the challenge of guiding the School through this new landscape. Together, they aim to harness AI's potential while remaining mindful of ethical and developmental concerns that come with its use by students.

"Our job is to prepare our students for the jobs of tomorrow, but it is daunting to be out front on something that is changing so rapidly," Mr. Molteni notes.

A New Classroom Ally

To help Blair's students learn to use generative artificial intelligence responsibly, Blair adopted Flint K-12 at the start of the 2024-2025 school year. A secure AI platform designed for schools, Flint K-12 is built on the ChatGPT-4o model and allows teachers to be in the same space as students when they use AI. Plainly speaking, it lets teachers see exactly what students ask and the response that AI generates.

"It is essentially ChatGPT with a lot of guardrails," Mr. Wagner explains. "We want students to access help through AI, but AI should never be doing the learning for them. Flint K-12 allows Blair faculty to design the guardrails." For instance, English teachers can direct the software to



Maria Issenchmidt, chair of the language department, has successfully integrated the Flint K-12 artificial intelligence tool into classroom learning.

offer students writing tips while ensuring it never writes any portion of an essay. One key advantage, Mr. Wagner notes, is that students receive feedback in real time. "If kids can get answers to questions quicker and improve the rate they are learning as a result, that is a real benefit," Mr. Wagner says.

From a teaching perspective, Blair's faculty have reacted to Flint K-12 with a healthy blend of hesitancy and excitement. In just the first month of school this year, there were 560 total sessions and 112 new "tutors," representing the number of times that students or faculty at Blair logged in and asked the software to perform a task. While not all teachers have integrated Flint K-12 into their classrooms, some have embraced it fully. Language teacher Allan Issenchmidt, for example, uses Flint K-12 to create stories that incorporate French vocabulary words, adjusting the level of complexity based upon the class level. Language department chair Maria Issenchmidt, who generally prefers a low-tech approach to teaching, has also found use for the platform. "For a typical homework assignment, I program Flint K-12 with the assignment and the answer key. Now when students get an incorrect answer, they can ask 'Why is this incorrect?' and get an immediate response," she says. "It has cut down significantly on those late-night 'I don't understand this' emails. Plus, we can spend more class time speaking French, because less clarification is needed from the last assignment."

Mr. Molteni stresses the importance of finding ways of using AI to amplify the quality of student learning. "In the sciences, we're seeing students use Flint K-12 to build learning tutors. If they have a quiz the next day, they set up a tutor to quiz them. Students are using AI like a study buddy."

"AI is a resource in students' toolbox to help them," adds Mr. Wagner. "For example, when teachers assign reading, we want students to engage with the text and have the interaction necessary to remember that passage. If we use AI to create a game or an activity around that text, we can support the memory and retention of what they've just read. It is a tool that helps them improve."

'No Such Thing as an Expert'

In their mission to teach students to harness the power of artificial intelligence responsibly, Mr. Molteni and Mr. Wagner have plunged headfirst into the rapidly changing field. Mr. Molteni, however, is quick to point out one humbling reality: "There is no such thing as an expert when it comes to AI." The first challenge the pair faced was, "How





Dean of Teaching and Learning Joe Wagner works with his biology students during a hands-on lab session.

do we build the AI knowledge that Blair will need?" To tackle that, both educators began reading extensively and closely following thought leaders such as Ethan Mollick, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business, who specializes in innovation and codirects Wharton's Generative AI Labs.

Mr. Wagner and Mr. Molteni also sought hands-on professional development, attending the Future Ready Brains Conference in New York City. The conference brought together neuroscientists, psychologists, researchers and educators to discuss adolescent brain development and the skills students need to thrive in this new frontier. "One thing we have discovered from all of our learning," Mr. Molteni notes, "is that the technology changes so fast; it's hard for anyone to remain well-versed in the topic for long."

Keeping up with the pace of AI's evolution is just one of the challenges the technology presents. Mr. Wagner, who also teaches science at Blair, has other concerns as well. He notes, for instance, that the energy consumption of generative AI is staggering. Forbes recently reported that ChatGPT daily consumes the power equal to 180,000 U.S. households. "There are real issues with long-term sustainability," Mr. Wagner points out, which all users should consider. There are also worries about data privacy and security. While Blair uses the Flint K-12 platform, which limits data access and sharing to the Blair community, other AI systems lack similar safeguards.

Of course, the concern topmost on the minds of many educators, like Mr. Wagner and Mr. Molteni, is ensuring that students don't become overly dependent on AI for deep and critical thinking, writing, creativity or the host of other skills needed for the next chapter in their lives. "AI should be a helpful coworker," Mr. Molteni explains. "We want to teach our students to use it the way you would ask a colleague for help—not do the work for them."

While schools may differ in their approaches to AI—ranging from prohibiting its use to allowing unlimited access—Blair's vision for AI in the classroom is clear: to continue using it responsibly to enhance learning. For, as Mr. Wagner succinctly puts it, "This is about preparing our students to be AI literate. With the amount of money and resources being poured into AI, it is clear the technology is here to stay. We are preparing students not just to use AI, but to navigate a world shaped by it."

Cristina Vivenzio '00 'STAYS GOLD' with Tony Award Win

In *The Outsiders*, Johnny Cade implores Ponyboy Curtis to "Stay gold." It's a poignant message, one that resonates with countless readers of S.E. Hinton's influential novel, viewers of Francis Ford Coppola's cult classic, and now, fans of the hit Broadway musical. At the 77th Tony Awards, producer Cristina Vivenzio '00 embodied that very sentiment, radiating in the incandescent glow of her victory as she accepted the award for Best Musical for her work on *The Outsiders*.

Standing on that grand stage was the culmination of a journey that began years earlier, on another stage—this one nestled on a hilltop in Blairstown, New Jersey. Cristina, who graduated from Blair Academy in 2000, had "great expectations" from the start. Her early days at Blair revealed a shining talent for theatre, with veteran theatre director and English teacher Craig Evans vividly remembering her performances.

"She had a great career right from the get-go," Mr. Evans recalls with pride. "Cristina was the lead in *Pippin*, a neat case of gender-blind casting, and she captivated us in *Arcadia*, which traveled to Peddie. She had this drive and vision, even as a student."

Cristina's passion for performance led her to New York University, where she graduated in 2004 with dreams of gracing the stage. But life, like the best stories, had a twist in store for her. She discovered that the magic of theatre wasn't confined to acting alone.



Cristina Vivenzio '00 (top, center) dazzled onstage in multiple performances with the Blair Academy Players.



Cristina joined the rest of *The Outsiders* team onstage to accept their Tony Award for Best Musical.



Cristina has worked in all aspects of Broadway theatre, including acting and producing.



Cristina poses outside the Lincoln Center with her partner, Justin O'Neill, before making history with her first Tony Award win. The couple met in high school with a little help from their mutual friend and Cristina's classmate, Adam Andre '00.

"I became an actor because I didn't know the other ways to break into theatre," Cristina admits. "After college, I threw myself into every opportunity: internships at booking agencies, assistant roles at an advertising firm. Little by little, I realized that all those different experiences—on stage and behind the scenes—were leading me toward producing."

That realization proved pivotal. Cristina carved out a name for herself as a well-rounded producer, eventually joining Jujamcyn, the powerhouse company behind Broadway hits like *The Book of Mormon*, *Jersey Boys* and *Kinky Boots*. Today, she works with The Araca Group, a "small but mighty" team, overseeing every aspect of production—from assembling creative teams to fundraising, marketing and casting.

Much of Cristina's success, she reflects, is rooted in the foundation she built at Blair. The mentorship she received in Blair's theatre department from Craig and Kaye Evans, former faculty members Steven and Judith Kampmann and Wayne Rasmussen, along with the top-tier facilities, gave her the space to explore her passion and cultivate her work-life balance early on.

"It's not lost on me that success in this industry doesn't always happen this way," she says, her voice filled with gratitude. "I constantly aim to laugh a lot and keep a positive attitude like Mr. Evans, because at the end of the day, I get to work in a field that I love and I will never take that gift for granted."

That gratitude was palpable when Cristina took the stage at the Tony Awards, clutching the iconic statue—a tribute to her dedication and the long journey to that moment, which has taken up permanent residency on her desk at home.

"It was surreal and wild," she recalls. "Standing there, I had to remind myself to breathe and to take it all in. This production has been close to my heart for a long time, and the support I've received along the way has been incredible."

Back in Blairstown, one of Cristina's biggest supporters, Mr. Evans, couldn't have been prouder. "It's a huge deal," he says with a fond smile. "Cristina went to New York to be a performer, and now she's risen to the top as a producer. She paid her dues, worked her way up and truly deserves this recognition."



Academics

Caeley Tierney '19 and Kate Gerdsen '20 getting to know some friends while visiting the turtle farm in Grand Cayman.



Mr. Gerdsen and a student dive into the wonders of the ocean using cutting-edge virtual reality technology.

Blair Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of Marine Science

In the fall of 2004, science teacher Rod Gerdsen pulled up to the gates of Blair with a bounce in his step. He had arrived at Blair to, among other responsibilities, teach four sections of ninth-grade biology. The department chair, Dr. Rick Clarke, knew of Mr. Gerdsen's master's degree in and love for marine biology and assured him he had a goal of expanding Blair's science electives in the future. At the time, Environmental Science was one of a few advanced courses Blair offered and expanding those opportunities was a focus for the department. In a short time, Mr. Gerdsen made a plan and, over the course of the year, created an expansive curriculum. He made an announcement at School Meeting late in the year, much to the excitement of students.

The first year of Marine Science, Mr. Gerdsen oversaw a single class of a dozen students, then it was two sections of 15 the following year. After that, the numbers ballooned beyond a typical classroom capacity, so Mr. Gerdsen moved to Cowan Auditorium, where he taught several sections with as many as 25 budding marine scientists. In the years since, the lecture-style space has served the class well, preparing the mostly seniors for their collegiate experience. Mr. Gerdsen jokes with a smile, "This is the closest I'll ever get to being a college professor!"

The goal of the Marine Science class is to introduce students to many aspects of the oceans and foster an awareness of society's connection to the sea. Material covered includes the physical science of oceans, particularly geology and chemistry, and the biology of various marine ecosystems with extensive focus on the living organisms that populate them. Classes include lectures, lab projects, regular class discussions centered on environmental topics and current events, and Long Winter Weekend research trips. Students write several research papers and give presentations on marine science topics.

Of course, as technology has changed over the years, so, too, has the class. Students have received data from oxygen sensors operated by the University of Rhode Island in Narragansett Bay, allowing them to analyze environmental conditions in real time. They've explored the undersea realm through the use of virtual reality systems, too, which has only deepened their appreciation for the environment. Over the years, Mr. Gerdsen has also invited speakers to enrich the curriculum, including renowned Rutgers University professor Dr. Richard Lutz, proud parent to Rebecca '01, Ryan '05 and Rich '07, who shared insights about hydrothermal vents in the Atlantic



When Lauren Mezzanotte '12 is not teaching marine and environmental science to high school students, she helps organize the "Reel It in for the Reefs" marine cleanup event.

and his research conducted in submersibles a thousand feet below the ocean's surface.

Since its debut, Marine Science has grown into one of Blair's signature courses, a perennial favorite for juniors and seniors and a cornerstone of the science department's curriculum. Students are drawn to it for various reasons. Some have an interest in dissection, a passion for conservation or a fascination with sharks. Often, they are drawn in by Mr. Gerdsen's enthusiasm for the subject. As one student, Eli Maloney '25, recalls, "At the new student barbecue, I saw Mr. Gerdsen wearing a shark tie. I went straight to him." After completing the class, Eli says, "Marine Science was my favorite experience at Blair. Being in a class with a teacher that is so passionate about things I care about was incredible."

Growing Ocean Stewards

Marine Science's popularity isn't just about the interesting topics or Mr. Gerdsen's enthusiasm—it's about the lasting impression the course leaves on its participants. Talking to former students of the course, one commonality emerges: After their introduction to marine science at Blair, many go on to careers in the field, inspired by both their experience in the class and their teacher. Eli, for one, is heading to Boston University next year, where he plans to major in marine science. Lauren Mezzanotte '12 teaches marine and environmental science at Jensen Beach High



Mr. Gerdsen and students examine a blue shark caught by a Blair parent.

School in Florida. She vividly remembers the trip her class took to Turks and Caicos with Mr. Gerdsen. "Nothing can replace being immersed in marine biology like that," she remembers. "We kayaked through mangroves, held upside-down jellyfish and snorkeled with a guide who inspired me to ask, 'How do I do this for a living?'"

Today, Lauren channels that inspiration into her own work, whether dissecting dogfish in the lab with her current students or helping to organize what she proudly notes will be the largest offshore ocean cleanup in Florida's history. Called "Reel It in for the Reefs," the cleanup event focuses on removing fishing line from Florida's shores before turtle nesting season. Last year, volunteers removed 750 pounds of marine debris, primarily fishing line and trash, from wrecks and reefs located off West Palm Beach County, Florida. This year, Lauren has secured more than 20 dive boats and 300 divers and expects to make an even larger impact. *(See box on opposite page for more information.)*

Reflecting on her journey, Lauren believes that much of her desire to pursue conservation and education started all those years ago at Blair. "I fell in love with marine biology and conservation in Mr. Gerdsen's class. Dissecting sharks taught me the importance of educating others—like debunking the myth that shark fin soup has a medicinal purpose. Now, with reef cleanups, we're trying to balance the needs of fishermen, divers and wildlife. We are using what we collect to educate, and it all starts with awareness."

That desire to raise awareness is echoed by another protege of Mr. Gerdsen, Brendan Schaffer '07. Brendan leads afterschool programs for Wildwood Public Schools in New Jersey, teaching 200 kids daily along the Atlantic coast. His lessons often focus on fostering appreciation for the beauty and importance of the shore.

"I've always had an affinity for the ocean and ocean animals," Brendan shares. "I grew up snorkeling with my dad. Taking Marine Science at Blair took it to the next level, and I really started to understand the science behind what I had been seeing."



Mr. Gerdsen celebrating his 51st birthday with Blair students in Grand Cayman.



Brendan Schaffer '07 posing with one of his award-winning marine sand sculptures.



Marine science students engage in a hands-on dogfish dissection lab.

After studying ecology and marine science at Rutgers, Brendan landed an internship at the Sanibel Sea School in Florida, teaching children about ocean advocacy. Later, as a naturalist and program director at the Nature Center of Cape May, he introduced students to the aquatic food chain and delighted them with the octopus in his marine lab. Now, in addition to his teaching role in Wildwood, Brendan is also moonlighting as a professional sand sculptor. His expertise in sand and water dynamics—along with his impressive artistic talent—has earned him three first-place titles in the Michigan State Championships of Sand Sculpting. "My whole life has been fostering a love for the ocean," he shares. "I'm really moved by it. As an ocean advocate, I am tasked to bring the joy that one experiences at the beach and share it with others."

Reflecting on 20 Years

If you ask Mr. Gerdsen what stands out most in his memory on the 20th anniversary of the class, he will tell you that he can't pick just one. Some of his best memories have been a trawling trip with students, collaborating with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in Delaware Bay and dissecting a six-foot blue shark, which was caught by a Blair parent, in the courtyard of Bogle Science Center. He will also never forget introducing students to feeding stingrays in the Cayman Islands or guiding them through mangroves and the crystal clear water of the Turks and Caicos islands. "They have all been amazing trips, and I've been fortunate for the overwhelming student interest," he notes.

As Marine Science celebrates its 20th anniversary, its legacy is clear: a generation of students motivated to safeguard our oceans and educate the next generation. "I came to Blair with a lot of ideas and a passion for the ocean," Mr. Gerdsen reflects. "It's been amazing to see how the program has grown and how students have taken what they've learned and turned it into action. It doesn't get any better than that."

From organizing large-scale reef cleanups to educating students across the country, alumni like Lauren and Brendan demonstrate the deep impact of Blair's marine science program. And, for current students like Eli, the journey is just beginning. "It's exciting to be part of a field with people who really care about it," he says. "I can't wait to see what the future holds."

On April 25, 2025, the annual "Reel It in for the Reefs" cleanup event will take place along Florida's coast, from Jupiter to Miami. This collective effort, organized with the help of Florida Fish and Wildlife, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and two nonprofits, National Save the Sea Turtle Foundation and Debris Free Oceans, focuses on removing marine debris from wrecks and reefs. Last year, the event removed 750 pounds of marine debris from Atlantic waters. This year, it is set to be the largest offshore scuba dive cleanup in Florida's history, involving more than 20 dive boats and 300 divers.

If you are interested in learning more about how to help protect Atlantic marine life and keep the ocean clean through this initiative, visit reelitinforthereefs.org.



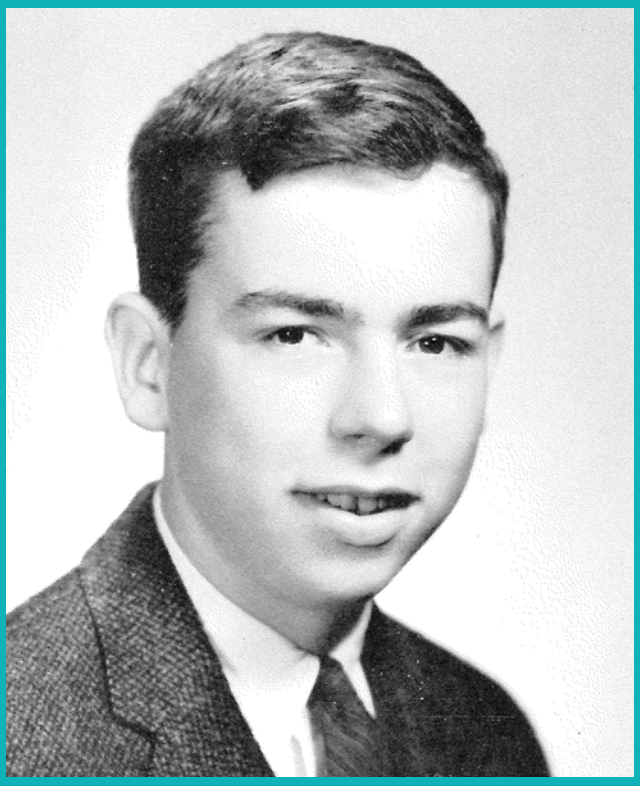
A large collection of trash, including plastics, fishing line and other debris, gathered during the 2023 reef cleanup highlights the ongoing efforts to protect marine ecosystems and preserve ocean biodiversity.

THE QUIET POWER OF COMMUNITY BUILDER WILL JOHNSON '62



Chelsea Hospital, one of just 19 hospitals nationwide to earn the prestigious double five-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Photo courtesy of Chelsea Hospital.

Those who change the world aren't always who we expect. While we may picture tech entrepreneurs, media moguls or scientists tinkering in labs, often, the true changemakers are the local leaders who quietly devote years to making our communities better. At age 80, Will Johnson '62 has had time to reflect on his life's work—developing hospitals—and how he rose to the top of his field. More importantly, he has considered the lasting impact of his work, realizing that the hospitals he helped establish have not only provided critical healthcare but have also become cornerstones of his Michigan community.



Will in his senior photo from the 1962 *ACTA*.

A Neighbor Lends a Hand

In many ways, Will's story begins when his father passed away, and the 12-year-old found himself feeling lost. "Our world changed," he remembers. Up until that point, Will had lived a comfortable life with his parents and sister in Summit, New Jersey, a suburban community where many residents, including Will's father, commuted to Manhattan for work.

The following summer, Will worked at Bell Labs, thanks to a connection with his neighbor, Ed Chiovarou. The Chiovarous were considering Blair for their own sons, Roy '62 and Thomas Lee '64, and seeing the family's situation, encouraged Will's mother to give thought to the Academy as well. Though the Johnsons didn't have the financial means to afford a private school education, Will recalls that Mr. Chiovarou went to bat for him. "He went to work with the leadership of Blair Academy and with Blair alumni living in Summit and nearby communities," all to find a way for Will to attend. Before long, Will was taking tests, going on interviews and learning new skills. His hard work paid off when he was offered a full scholarship.

The Scholarship That Opened Doors

Thinking about his years on the hilltop, Will shared, "I was given an opportunity to attend Blair Academy on a full scholarship. I waited tables three times a day and raised my hand every time a volunteer was needed. I was 14 when I entered Blair in the fall of 1959. I had recently lost my father, and I was lost intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Blair provided boundaries, focus, encouraged self-discipline, provided an educational pathway and exposed me to the life lesson that your peer group will be constantly redefined as your life progresses."



Will and his partner, Diane Kurtz, enjoying a trip to Top of the Rock in Missouri.

The Blair experience became the foundation for Will's adult life. After completing his undergraduate studies at The College of Wooster, Will decided to explore hospital administration, which was an emerging field in the 1960s. He earned a master's degree in that field from the University of Michigan, and then completed a residency at Wilmington Medical Center in Delaware, not far from where his grandfather had been a physician for nearly five decades.

Keys to Excellence

Will's career began to take off after three years as an assistant hospital administrator at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. He transitioned to a role as vice president for professional services at St. Peter's Hospital in New York, and then, in 1975, joined Chelsea Community Hospital in Michigan. Over the course of the next 23 years, Will served as the hospital's chief executive officer, building it into one of America's top 100 hospitals, a distinction it still holds today.

When Will started at Chelsea, the hospital was a modest organization with fewer than 100 employees. By the time he retired, it had grown to more than 1,200 employees and was the largest employer in the region. The hospital didn't just grow in size. It earned a reputation for excellence in healthcare, consistently earning top safety grades and national recognition as an excellent teaching hospital. "We started with 14 medical staff, and grew to 330 by the time I retired," Will recalls. "Today, there are more than 700 physicians on staff at Chelsea. That is unique in a community of 5,500."

The secret to Chelsea Hospital's success, Will reflects, lay in its family-centered, community-approach to hiring and retaining staff. To start, they established Michigan's first employer-based childcare center. They followed up with a job share for employees.

At a time when most hospitals did not even allow children under 12 to visit, Chelsea welcomed them, believing that family connection could speed patients' healing.

"We also did something that most employers didn't," Will recalls. During job interviews, applicants were encouraged to bring their spouses and children. "That made a difference. It showed we cared about the family, not just the employee."



Will playing bridge in his third-floor bedroom in East Hall, where dorm head and mathematics teacher Gordie Paul often joined him for games. Over time, Will came to see the principles Mr. Paul shared through bridge as metaphors for life.

This holistic, nurturing approach extended beyond hiring. The hospital made a practice of encouraging activities and organizations that supported their employees' lives. "We backed service clubs and helped raise funds for Faith in Action [a faith-based organization that supports local communities]. We hosted meals, rehearsal dinners and even wedding receptions for staff," Will shares with pride.

By addressing needs like nutritious food, healthcare, physical activity and creating social bonds, the hospital became a trusted partner to the local town of Chelsea. In recognition of this impact, the town even named the street leading to the hospital after Will. Ever humble, Will emphasizes the collective effort behind the achievements. "We had a great team, and many remained with us for 30 years or more," Will notes. "Today, Chelsea remains fully staffed," a rare achievement in American healthcare, "where less than 10 percent of hospitals can say the same."

A Life of Gratitude & Giving Back

Now retired, Will spends his days enjoying time with his partner, Diane Kurtz, children and grandchildren, playing golf, pickleball and traveling, and he often thinks about paying it forward. As the onetime recipient of the Blair Alumni Scholarship, Will understands the importance of connections, having an advocate and benefiting from the generosity of others. Having sponsored more than 135 scholarships at Blair, Wooster, Michigan and in the Chelsea community, he hopes, he says, to "return the favor as best I can."

Will's early experiences at Blair, he says, shaped his views on leadership and community. "The Chiovarous showed me what a difference it makes to have an advocate. Waiting tables in the dining hall taught me a lesson in time management. Playing bridge with [former mathematics teacher] Gordie Paul, a great teacher and world-class bridge player, taught me the value of continuous improvement, in whatever you do."

Looking back, Will realizes that, while he may not have fully grasped the significance of those lessons at the time, they became the cornerstones of his life's work. "Those lessons at Blair were so important, and over time, I made use of them. I realized how they influenced how much I value the opportunity to serve."

Will's dedication reminds us all that impactful change isn't always driven by those in the spotlight. Sometimes, it's the steady, everyday efforts of those like Will, who devote their lives to building healthy and thriving communities, that make all the difference.



(*Left to right*) Classmates James "Foxie" Fox '62 and Dennis Peachey '62 join Will during a visit to Blair in 2014.

We loved hearing Will's story of how the Chiovarou family connected him to Blair. Tell us yours! Share your experience with us at *bulletin@blair.edu* and your story may be featured in an upcoming issue.

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79 & Latta Browse



Outside the Classroom



Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79 vividly recalls a moment early in her 40-year career at Blair that brought a smile to her face. While on duty in Locke Hall, a student confessed, “I love my geometry teacher, Mr. Browse, but I still haven’t met Mrs. Browse.”

This incident inspired a good deal of laughter in the Browse house, as Carolyn realized that their goal of maintaining independent identities had perhaps been too successful! Over the decades, Carolyn and her husband, Latta Browse, have continued to build complementary legacies while carving out their own unique paths—Latta as a math teacher, advisor and head girls’ cross country coach, and Carolyn as Dean of Campus Life, Director of Leadership Programs, English teacher and assistant softball coach.

Together, they have raised their children, Tyler ’08 and Annelies ’13, while mentoring countless students whose lives they’ve touched both in and out of the classroom. Their combined 80 years (give or take) at Blair speak volumes about their dedication to the School and impact on the community.

In this issue’s “Outside the Classroom,” Carolyn and Latta share their extraordinary journey, reflecting on life, work and family in the place they’ve called home for so long.

Questions for Latta & Carolyn

How did you two meet?

Latta: We met at Blair, when we were young faculty. I had been teaching here for two years, and Carolyn was recruited when she came back for her fifth reunion.

Carolyn: When I met Latta, he was so rude! He didn’t even say hello to me, even though [former admission associate] Heidi Rowe introduced us.

Latta: I had just finished up a run! I’m thinking, here is a student my colleague is introducing me to—I’m sure I said hello—but I wasn’t hanging around at that moment.

Carolyn: We really became friends that year, mostly in the softball season. A couple of his advisees were some of the key players on the team and he was coaching baseball back then, so it was a topic we easily connected on.

How have you navigated a shared Blair experience?

Latta: Together; it’s really cool having the same job at the same place as my spouse, in the sense that we know each other’s jobs and lives so well. Separate from the personal, we know the professional, and I think that it must be difficult to come home to someone who really doesn’t understand what my day was like. I think that is key, and when we had kids and they came here, they had a pretty full picture of us as parents and teachers, and we had a full picture of them.

Carolyn: When we got married [in 1987], there were almost no working couples. [Former Director of Advancement and Strategic Planning] Monie Hardwick stepping into a variety of roles at Blair while Chan [Hardwick] was Head of School was the first working couple, and [former faculty members] Kathy and Dick Malley. When we were engaged, older faculty asked me if I would continue to work! It was a different era—no childcare, mostly male faculty—and I often found myself the lone female representative at a Board meeting—at age 28! It was really important to us to maintain our separate voices and distinct identities. We had different styles at first of caring for students, and we disagreed on things, so it was important to keep our opinions independent.

Outside the Classroom

What has been the most rewarding part of working at Blair?

Carolyn: It's just so hard to say. When I say teaching, I think coaching. When I say coaching, I think teaching. When I say either of those, I think advising or dorm life. It's just impossible to decide, it's all been so powerful. In different years, it's been different domains. Some years, you know you've done the most meaningful work you could do in the dorm setting. Some years, it's the classroom or as a coach. It really shifts through periods.

It's also been meaningful to mentor younger faculty members, but also to be inspired by colleagues and by students. Our students are incredibly inspiring.

Latta: Teaching, advising and coaching. I've been coaching girls' cross country for 20 years, and it's become a key part of my identity, but teaching math is also fun. And then advising is super important. The most significant change at Blair since I've been here was Chan Hardwick's introduction of the system whereby students pick their advisors. I think that is everything. All three of those matter so much to me, and those are the pillars on which I built my life here.

Questions for Latta

As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I never wanted to be a teacher. When my parents dropped me off at college, my father said, "Son, don't do anything you'll be ashamed of later," and my mom said, "Dear, we just want you to be happy, but please don't be a teacher." After college, I had half-hearted interviews as a math major with banks and financial firms, but I didn't make it to any second interviews and knew I had to do something! My family has an adventurous spirit so I decided I'd join the Peace Corps. I thought, "That's an adventure; as a math major, I'll teach math."



From left to right, Latta, Tyler '08, Annelies '13 and Tyler's wife, Cassie, capture a memory at the Tour de France.



Carolyn has coached softball for more than 25 years and works with friend and role model Julie Foudy at the Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy (JFSLA). From left to right, Carolyn, Julie, assistant softball coach Christina Giambrone '06 and fellow JFSLA coach Winnie Lizardo Orbe '06 tour campus during Julie's visit to Blair.



The Browses' many adventures include a trip to the Alps.

I taught high school in Malaysia on an amazing adventure, had a wonderful time and came back at age 26 determined to get a real job and still got nowhere. I "panic applied" to every boarding school I could think of and got offers from Peddie, Lawrenceville and Blair—and, obviously, I chose the right one.

I left Blair after we got married to study Islamic Studies at Columbia because I still wasn't sure about teaching, but, after two years there, I realized that I didn't want to be an academic. Everything kept bringing me back to teaching, so at age 33, I decided this is where I was meant to be.

Carolyn: It was the classes of 1989 and 1990—he loved them so much. Those classes sealed the deal.

What was it like raising children at Blair?

A: It was great, kind of a Norman Rockwell sort of small town America. As a kid, you just get so much positive feedback. Everyone loves you, and I don't think it spoils faculty children. It's such a beneficial view to feel like the world loves you and it's such a positive place. This was before there was a daycare center, but Karen Hazen, wife of former Athletics Director Dan Hazen, did an unbelievable job of loving and taking care of our kids when they were young. She was indispensable to their early lives, to have her come over every day and not only be their grandparent but also teach them. We couldn't have done it without her and that was wonderful for them to have.

Questions for Carolyn

Can you tell us about your time teaching in Belgium?

A: Ever since Latta's Peace Corps experience, he wanted us to have an international adventure. Tyler was at a perfect age, and so we went for it. It wouldn't have been possible if Chan Hardwick had not understood and paved the way for us to leave and return to Blair within the next few years if we wanted to.

I didn't really want to go; Latta was the driving force behind it. But then I went, loved it and didn't want to come back. And Latta was homesick for Blair so badly.

It was a great adventure for me. He had gone on those adventures, but I hadn't, so it was a life-changing experience. Teaching in a day school gave me an entirely new perspective. I was doing a lot more student-facing work in the international school, and he was teaching five sections of 30 students back-to-back, so it was much easier for me to connect into the student community. And when Annelies was born, we decided, "Let's go back!"

What advice do you give new faculty members at Blair?

A: If you love kids, if you have a sense of humor about yourself and you love your subject content—no matter what it is—you will be successful. That doesn't mean you won't make mistakes, but you will be successful in this job and you will have fun with it. You have to give yourself permission to enjoy it and find the fun. I can vividly remember my first week here thinking this was the best job in the whole world, and I still think so today.



Carolyn and Latta traveled to Singapore in 2018 to celebrate the wedding of Richie Eu '03 and his wife, Saé.



For 20 years, Latta has mentored a generation of runners as the girls' cross country coach.



Carolyn's impact on the Blair community can be felt in the dorms, on the fields and in her English classroom.

With Closing in Sight,

All In Continues to Make School History





At Alumni Weekend this June, Blair Academy will close out *All In*, its most ambitious comprehensive fundraising campaign ever. With two months left to go, we have already surpassed our goal of $140 million, thanks to the generosity of nearly 6,000 donors.

"The campaign's impact literally touches all areas of school life and we couldn't be prouder of the way in which the Blair community came together to support *All In*'s strategic priorities and to help the School achieve incredible milestones," said Head of School Peter G. Curran. "Our success would not have been possible without the leadership and generosity of many, as well as their deep care for our institution and dedication to making the Blair experience even more enriching and impactful for future generations."

Since 2018, Blair has strategically invested in its employees to sustain the powerful teacher-student relationships that form the foundation of great learning. Beyond focusing on recruiting and retaining the talented and student-centered faculty and staff who make the Blair experience transformative, the School furthered its commitment to ensuring that our community is a richly diverse, dynamic and inclusive place where students are challenged in every endeavor and feel a deep sense of belonging. Enhancing our curricular and cocurricular offerings has also been a critical priority, as has maximizing the impact of our campus facilities to amplify our mission. Finally, securing the financial strength of the institution continues to be paramount, and we are proud of everything that *All In* has realized in raising endowed funds to support our people, programs, campus and financial future.





To give a quick snapshot of some of the most impressive accomplishments made possible by *All In*, over the course of the campaign, support from the Blair community allowed us to:

- Grow Blair's endowment by $60 million
- Establish 38 endowed scholarships
- Fund the School's compensation plan to retain faculty
- Create the Sigety Faculty Summer Institute for employee professional development
- Create and implement a comprehensive and engaging advanced curriculum of more than 50 honors, advanced seminar and advanced survey classes
- Launch Blair's Integrated Science Research program
- Add Intersession (formerly J-term) to the curriculum
- Document two estate gifts of $10 million
- Construct or renovate 15 buildings and spaces:
    - The **Chiang-Elghanayan Center for Innovation and Collaboration** inspires creativity, promotes innovative thinking and fosters collaboration.
    - **Bogle Science Center** was renovated to include glass-walled classrooms, state-of-the-art labs and dedicated research space.
    - **Hoffman House** renovations converted the second floor of the existing Health Center to serve as the School's 10th dorm.
    - The **Crew Training Center** offers Blair crew athletes the ability to practice on the water during every season in an eight-person rowing tank.
    - The **J. Li Golf Training Center** features two hitting bay simulators and a putting/chipping area, allowing Blair athletes to practice year-round.
    - **Weber Hall** was renovated and became home to the mathematics department.
    - The student-named "**Shipyard**" includes outdoor basketball and pickleball courts.
    - **Sigety Alumni House** includes a faculty apartment and five guest suites.
    - The carefully restored **Kathleen House** and **Hoby House** are faculty residences located on Main Street. Formerly the First National Bank of Blairstown, Hoby House offers visitors the opportunity to relax in the old bank's vault!
    - Overlooking the golf course, **Steckel & Miller House** was rebuilt to include two faculty residences honoring long-serving Blair teachers.



- The **Blair "Bubble"**—aka "Lulu's Place"—offers Blair students a large heated space to train and engage in a variety of sports and activities.
- Scheduled to open in August 2025, the **Center for Health and Well-Being** will allow Blair's health-services and counseling teams to occupy the same space for the first time in School history. It will also include areas where students can access health resources, study and socialize.
- The newly renovated **Ski Center** offers a hub for training, storing equipment and team bonding.
- In our newly renovated **Academic Center** on the top floor of Timken Library, our academic team meets regularly with students to ensure all their academic needs are met.
- **Meerwarth Courtyard** got a design refresh that included new landscaping, additional seating and a more open aesthetic that has widened the busy pathway between Clinton and Locke Halls.



The Crew Training Center, a cutting-edge facility specifically designed and built to support winter training, officially opened in October 2021.



Recently redesigned Meerwarth Courtyard is among the first Blair sites visited by prospective families.



SAVE THE DATE!

We look forward to applauding *All In*'s successes on the evening of Saturday, June 7, 2025, as we welcome back to Blair The Grooveline, which performed in the Bowl a couple of years ago as the School celebrated its 175th anniversary. Led by singer and songwriter (and Blair Arts Guild honoree) Jon Williams '89, the band includes a 12-piece ensemble, including four vocalists and a Grammy Award-winning percussionist. We hope you can join us in toasting the close of one chapter of Blair history and the School's exciting future!


FAREWELL TO
BLAIR
VETERANS



This year, Blair bids farewell to eight of our most beloved and veteran members. For 40 years, they've worked to quietly shape our school—a security guard, maintenance worker, administrative assistant, and teachers of English, math, history and drama—all leaving their mark on our community. As they begin the next chapter of their lives, we celebrate the legacy they've written into the story of the Academy.

To honor all that they have given to Blair over the last four decades, we asked those who've worked most closely with these veteran Buccaneers to share, in their own words, their favorite memories and reflections on the impact they have made on the hilltop.



Kathy Otinsky

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, STUDENT LIFE OFFICE
STARTED AT BLAIR IN THE SUMMER OF 1976, 49 YEARS AGO

By Karyn Schar, *print shop coordinator*

My sister, Kathy, started her career here at Blair in 1976, working in the printing office. Just a few years later, in 1979, she stepped away to start a family, and that's when I joined Blair, also in the school office and printing/mail office. In 1985, Kathy returned, this time as the school office secretary in Clinton Hall. It was an exciting time—we both learned to use computers, which made our jobs easier, though it took some getting used to! Fast-forward to 2009, and Kathy and I got to work together again. This time around, she helped me log in packages, and it felt like when we were children again, happily "playing school" and having fun with each other.

Kathy has always been the kind of person who steps up to help whenever she can. On 9/11, she calmly answered calls reassuring parents that their children were in no immediate danger. It's no wonder she's lovingly known as "the voice of Blair." During the pandemic, we worked together to send students their textbooks so they could continue their lessons online, making sure Blair learning never stopped. I am extremely grateful that we got this opportunity to work together, and I will surely miss her, especially during the busy times when I look forward to her help. Happy retirement, Kathy!!

—Your Loving Sis, Karyn



Dave Naysmith

MATHEMATICS TEACHER
STARTED AT BLAIR IN 2004, 21 YEARS AGO

By Latta Browse, *mathematics teacher*

Dave Naysmith will put the finishing touches on an incredible teaching career this spring, retiring after spending the past 60 years—60!—teaching the wonders, joys and mysteries of mathematics to generations of high school students.

At Blair, Dave was known for his patience and ability to break down even the most complex of mathematical ideas, his boundless willingness to meet students for extra work outside of class, and the kindness and courtesy with which he treated every student. Dave's popular Family Weekend project, demonstrating the maximum volume of a box cut out of a sheet of construction paper by filling it with the greatest number of Starburst possible, was a highlight for every student, Dave himself and his wife, Elaine, who documented the day each year and decorated the classroom with photos of everyone who took part. Dave has a knack for personalizing his classroom and ensuring that every student who steps into it feels valued, comfortable and confident that they can handle the mathematics to come. He is also known for his signature sartorial style—bolo ties and snakeskin boots—as well as his customized red Camaro with its "46 Peaks" personalized license plate commemorating his love of, and lifelong exploration of, the Adirondack Mountains. Dave is a die-hard Yankees fan who, in a different life, would probably wish he could have been Mickey Mantle. Dave, you might never hear 60,000 people roaring your name on a beautiful October evening in the Bronx while delivering another World Series championship, but in our little world of high school math, it is you who are the GOAT!



Andy Gramberg

GROUNDS TEAM MEMBER
STARTED AT BLAIR IN NOVEMBER 1979, 46 YEARS AGO

By Steve Fields, *former grounds team member*

I have worked with Andy Gramberg for 40 years, and over 40 years, you really get to know a person! If there is one thing I can say for sure, it's that there are two things that Andy Gramberg loves more than anything: Chinese food and NHL hockey.

Andy started working at Blair shortly after getting his degree in horticulture from County College of Morris, and when I met him, he was wearing one of those triangle-shaped

hats with a feather, straight out of *Robin Hood*. I remember thinking, "This could be interesting." We both started on Blair's golf course, maintaining the grass, and it didn't take long to realize that, regardless of his fashion, Andy is a very hard worker.

Over the years, we've covered the whole campus and more tasks than I can count. We've jumped into the water to clear logs from Blair Bridge and bunked in the maintenance building on Park Street, getting up in the middle of the night—Andy driving the plow and me shoveling walkways—to make sure the kids and teachers got to class safely in the morning. In the summer, we have worked side by side, keeping the grounds looking sharp, pulling weeds and planting flowers. That is no small task. But, no matter how hard the job, Andy has always been dependable. The man is never late.

Now, Andy's real quiet most of the time—except when it comes to food. He's got strong opinions about food, and trust me, you don't want to get into a debate with him about the best dumplings in town. He's been known to go on about lo mein. Honestly, I'm not sure what Andy will do when he retires, but it wouldn't surprise me if he had been training all these years for a second career as a food critic. I do hope he gets season tickets to the Islanders. He deserves it.



Dale Klaver

SAFETY DIRECTOR
STARTED AT BLAIR IN MARCH 1991, 34 YEARS AGO

By Chuck Warner, *security team member*

A few months ago, a member of the maintenance team and I saw Dale driving across campus, with thick clouds of smoke rolling out from under his vehicle. We radio'd him right away, saying, "Dale, you better pull over, the Jeep's on fire!" Dale reacted the way he always does—calm and cool. "All right, I'll check it out," he replied casually, pulling over as if it was just another day.

I have worked with Dale Klaver on Blair's security team for 16 years, and he is always like that. He may be letting a student into a building after being locked out, helping the campus execute a security drill or reacting to an emergency, but Dale is always calm and collected. I'll never forget the time after a hurricane knocked out power to campus. We spent 10 hours in the cold and dark, starting all the campus generators. Despite the long day, Dale volunteered to finish, insisting that I go home and rest. He is a very nice man to work with.

If you happen to ever get in the security Jeep and hear country music on the radio, you can bet Dale was the last one to drive it. Now, after 34 years at Blair, Dale is retiring. But, knowing him, he will not be slowing down. He and his wife, Millie, plan to take their camper and spend more time with their kids, DJ '05 and Krystal '00, and three grandkids. And with a little extra time on his hands, I have no doubt Dale will finish restoring that '53 Chevy.

It's been a pleasure working alongside Dale all these years. Blair won't be the same without him, but I'm sure wherever he goes next, he'll bring the same calm, steady hand that made him such a good colleague and friend.



Craig Evans

ENGLISH & PERFORMING ARTS TEACHER; THEATRE DIRECTOR
STARTED AT BLAIR IN 1994, 31 YEARS AGO

Kaye Evans

ENGLISH TEACHER; ASSISTANT THEATRE DIRECTOR; COORDINATOR OF DAY STUDENTS
STARTED AT BLAIR IN 1994, 31 YEARS AGO

By Carolyn-Conforti Browse '79, *English teacher, Dean of Campus Life & Director of Leadership Programs*



Craig and Kaye are off to new adventures; for 31 years, they have been at the heart of all that makes Blair a place of growth and kindness. A list of all they have accomplished would take up all the space in this *Bulletin*. Both of these veteran professionals have worked to create community and teach the values of creativity, curiosity and compassion.

Craig is a builder in every sense of the word—of culture, of community and of art. Craig can always be counted on to raise our spirits—he is "Mr. Peddie Week," and future Bucs will miss his ever-present shout of "Beat Peddie!" whenever our frenemy school is mentioned, as well as his annual inspirational speeches.

Shakespeare's monologue, "All the world's a stage," seems especially relevant to Craig's approach to his service at Blair. It occurs to me that Craig has always worked to make every "stage" he occupies a home for others. Countless thespians have grown under his tutelage; his passion for theatre and literature has inspired both the professional (so many of his protégés have successfully made a life in theatre and film!) and the amateur. His coaching of kids has been extraordinary; all are welcome, safe and challenged in his theatre circle. With his guidance and energy, they find reservoirs of strength and courage they did not know they possessed and carry that newfound confidence throughout their entire lives. Craig's own talents have been seen everywhere at Blair and in the wider community—galvanizing the faculty to put on plays, acting in local productions or playing during community events in town. He is able to occupy center stage delivering moving Chapels or to blend into the background of the set—he has always done what Blair needs of him, never missing class, dinners or meetings. His fingerprints are on so many Blair fixtures—whether inventing the Frisbee golf course or building the outdoor theatre by hand. An admirable example to others, both student and colleague, he never seeks credit or applause.

Much like Kaye Evans. Kaye is also a powerful builder of communities, just as Craig is, and ferociously dedicated to all lucky enough to be in her wide circle. When we honored Kaye for 25 years of service, I wrote: "There is no better copilot in the world. Whenever you may be steering, Kaye's gentle guidance will help you find the better path." You will not find calm, kind and patient Kaye seeking the spotlight, or on center stage, but you will always find her at the side of someone else, of course Craig's, but also her friends, her students and advisees, or anyone in need of support or guidance. Her hallmark is her consistency of care, which takes the form of the encouraging note, the wise counsel, the baked goods in the department office, the birthday acknowledgments or a holiday treat for her advisees. As a fellow faculty member once said, "She is the invisible hand who gives you what you need before you even realize that you need it." She has mentored all of the new members of the English department for years, and is perennially a sought-after advisor. As a teacher, she never fails to deliver for her students; she holds them to high standards (ask anyone who has been through her essay exhibition review) and knows how to elicit their best work. Her tenure has been marked by her overwhelming care and concern for others—be it designing the exhibition program or English 2 curriculum, establishing the Community Service program or taking on the oversight of the day student population.

As this wonderful couple moves on to build their next adventures, they leave a legacy of kindness, dedication and excellence. Blair is immeasurably better for the time they gave us, and we wish them all the best!



Robert Brandwood

ENGLISH TEACHER
STARTED AT BLAIR IN 1985, 40 YEARS AGO

Joanne Brandwood

HISTORY TEACHER
STARTED AT BLAIR IN 2013, 12 YEARS AGO

By Ann Williams, *history teacher & Director of Timken Library*

Anyone who has been at Blair five minutes wants to hear the classic Bob and Joanne Brandwood stories: Peace Corps volunteers, legendary parents of five superstar Blair kids, superb teachers, Bob as magical soccer coach and reader of poetry so beautifully delivered that Armstrong-Hipkins falls silent under his spell, and Joanne making the world a better place with her commitment and drive for community service. The Blair community holds a special place in the pantheon for them. But those aren't my stories to tell.

What is my story? Three days into my new job, I found myself at Sharpe House for a bridal shower, amid a sea of unfamiliar faces. The guessing game they were playing was shockingly personal and a bit embarrassing for the

bride-to-be and I was trying to stifle an incredulous laugh when a friendly voice beside me assured me that everyone already knew this story and the laughter was fine. That voice belonged to none other than Joanne Brandwood, my first friend at Blair. I was instantly at ease. Her warmth and directness made me feel at home, but I was disappointed to learn that I would not be able to hang out with her at lunch or between classes since she was not teaching faculty.

Many of my "firsts" at Blair trace back to the Brandwood family. During my first year in new faculty dorm-duty training, I was paired with veteran teachers and rookies to role-play what would happen if a student was suspected of being out of the dorm after-hours smoking. In the exercise, the "student" stubbornly denied everything, and it looked like this case would be "resolved" with nothing more than an ineffective finger wagging. Then Bob Brandwood gave a small sigh and very quietly spoke up. "Well, that is the 13th toll of the clock" (or something like that! This was not an expression I had ever heard before, and I assumed it meant a GIANT LIE). Everyone stopped and Bob pierced the "student" with a direct gaze. "Why," he asked calmly but firmly, "would I believe anything you have said up to this point when you are clearly not telling the truth? You have one last chance to tell us what has actually happened before.…" At his slight shrug and outstretched palms, everyone froze. At that, the "student" quickly admitted every crime he had ever committed. I suspect he even made up a few to get the interview over with. Needless to say, I was dazzled and impressed. I tucked that moment away—ready to use later at home—but I think you really need the accent to pull it off.

Bob gave me my first chance to teach a class at Blair and I was hooked! That winter, I taught a semester of senior English where we wrote a research paper on *Macbeth* and all went well. Sure, some seniors groaned at the length of the paper, but they toiled away and their papers were eventually good. Bob was generous and helpful, dropping in on my class and giving pointers and compliments that I am sure were not so much earned as they were meant to be aspirational. Then the spring semester arrived and, with it, a seismic shift. The seniors stopped talking, reading or doing any perceptible work. In a panic, I turned to Bob, convinced we'd never make it to graduation at this rate. "Hmm," he said thoughtfully. "I'll come and stay the whole class and see what suggestions I can make." Long story short, we launched into class and I gave them their warm-up exercise: three-minute speech prompts with seven minutes to prepare. Maybe two students scribbled down some thoughts, but most just sat there. Bob didn't do anything, he just watched.

When it was time to start, as usual, the first student mumbled something about needing more time and suggested we come back to him at the end. We moved on and Bob did not bat an eye as I began to sweat. The next student also tried to "pass" and that's when Bob, in his unflappable way, gently said, "We'll wait."

And so we did. Agonizing minutes and minutes went by. I may have been the MOST uncomfortable one around the table. Eventually, that student offered a decent response and, after that, the responses opened up and everyone participated.

The most valuable lesson I learned that day? Don't let them off the hook. Sometimes, you have to just sit in silence until the student takes the risk and participates. Game changer, for sure, and I've carried that lesson with me ever since.

Later, when Joanne joined the teaching faculty, we became close collaborators and partners in the fun of teaching European history to sophomores. It made work a pleasure to have her to bounce ideas off of and share resources. Living off campus, I had often felt a little removed from the famous "Blair Bubble" faculty community. But, with Joanne as my friend, for the first time, I really felt integrated into the totality of Blair.

Now, as we face the bittersweet moment of saying goodbye to Bob and Joanne…I have to admit to having been really salty toward them this final year. I've demanded to know: Who am I going to moan about Manchester United with? Who will laugh at my dumb stories of growing up? Only someone who grew up in a family of seven or more siblings could ever really "get it." UGH. I did recently promise to stop haranguing them for abandoning me. But I never claimed to be a legend, only to have been lucky enough to rub shoulders with them. I am grateful for their love, care and humor, and I will do my best to carry on while their wisecracks echo in my head. And that, my friends, is no 13th toll of the clock.

Alumni Events

Roundtables Bring Real-World Wisdom

It sounds like the start of a joke: "An attorney, two business owners and a financial executive walk into a room…" But, in reality, it is the beginning of a thought-provoking conversation for many Blair students—and a unique opportunity to connect with alumni who have become leaders in a wide variety of fields. Blair has long welcomed alumni to share their professional experiences with our students, but this year, the initiative has been renewed under the guidance of the Blair advancement team and history department chair and Society of Skeptics Director Jason Beck. "We've seen how valuable it is for students to explore a variety of industries and connect with alumni who can share their experience in how they got into those fields," explains Director of Stewardship Catie Urfer. "We're just delighted to welcome so many accomplished alumni back to campus through the Roundtable Series."

Financial executive Andrew Schmeelk '04 kicked off Blair's Roundtable program in October, sharing his journey from Blair to Villanova to his current role as senior advisor at investment giant Morgan Creek Capital. While many

"These Roundtables are a great way to showcase our alums who are out in the world in all kinds of professions. Who knows? One day, some of our current students might return to Blair, ready to impart their wisdom to the next generation."

—Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall



Morgan Creek Capital Management Senior Advisor Andrew Schmeelk '04.

Blair students know Matt Gallira ’08 for his award-winning Big Mozz mozzarella sticks, in November, they learned the secrets behind the businessman and entrepreneur’s rise. April will bring Jennifer Cable ’03, president of Thorlabs, who plans to recount to students how a small operation that started in a spare bedroom transformed into a global photonics manufacturer with over 2,000 employees in nine countries. Finally, Blair students will hear from Lauren (Makar) Haley ’93. After Blair, Lauren earned her BA from the University of Rochester and her JD from Seton Hall Law School, where she edited *The Constitutional Law Journal* and chaired the Women’s Law Forum. She received the National Association of Women Lawyers’ Outstanding Law Student Award and is now general counsel for Spring Health, where she works to make mental health accessible worldwide.

So, what did happen when an attorney, two business people and a financial executive walked into a room full of curious students at Blair this year? They sparked a lively exchange of conversation, advice and ideas that had students rethinking what is possible in their own futures. Thanks to the Roundtable Series, these alums brought the real world into the classroom, offering students a glimpse of the diverse paths ahead.



President of Thorlabs Jennifer Cable ’03.



General counsel for Spring Health Lauren (Makar) Haley ’93.



Entrepreneur and businessman Matt Gallira ’08.



Athletics

Ava Fajardo '26 charges for the net against Hoosac School.



Winter track stars, left to right: Mayan Muchugia ’26, Jaiveer Chauhan ’26, Danny Ndiritu ’25 and Andrew Zhang ’26 pose for Media Day.



Wilder Merton ’26 races in the swim meet against Pope John.

Vedwin Nivas ’28 wrestles against a difficult Wyoming Seminary opponent.



The ski team got a jump on winter with a preseason trip to Park City, Utah, to stretch their legs and bond as a team.



Hannah Wilson ’26 jumps in the pool in a relay against Pope John. Hannah added more records to her resume this season, breaking the pool record in the 100 back, 100 free, 200 free, 200 IM and the 500 free. Teammates (*left to right*) Riley Bacinski ’25, who also broke a pool record in the 50 free, and Calista Chen ’28 cheer Hannah on behind the podium.



Asser Eldemerdash ’26 hits a forehand against a University School opponent in Blair’s annual Squash Invitational.

Ian Archbold ’28 looking to score at the basket against Peddie School.



Photo courtesy of Phillips Exeter Academy.

From Blair to Exeter:

Panos Voulgaris '00, the Art of Coaching & Football's Oldest Rivalries

By English department chair Jim Moore, Hon. '93

Soon after arriving at Blair as a postgraduate in the fall of 1999, Panos Voulgaris '00 sat in Cowan Auditorium listening to the journalist Buzz Bissinger. Bissinger, that night's Society of Skeptics speaker, was discussing *Friday Night Lights*, his *New York Times* bestseller about high school football culture in Texas, a book Panos had read a number of times. It is impossible to overstate the importance of this event to Panos; two weeks before, he had taken a call from Blair's former Dean of Admission Barbara Haase, inviting him to join the senior class of a school he had never heard of before, and now, here he was at 18, engaging with the author. After the presentation, Panos followed Bissinger, former Blair history teacher and director of the Skeptics program Dr. Martin Miller, Hon. '81, and other faculty to Marty's campus house to continue the discussion. At the end of the night, Bissinger signed Panos' own, well-thumbed copy of *Friday Night Lights*.

Panos has reread that copy many times in the quarter century since. Now it sits, among such foundational football titles as *The Split Line T Offense, The Football Coach's Guide to Secondary Defenses* and *The Modern Short Punt*, in his office at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, where he is head football coach and a member of the faculty. The office itself is one of those spaces that those of us who do what we do don't know we want until we see it. It is the last remaining of the original squash courts in Exeter's stolidly iconic Thompson Gym, dating from sometime in the 1920s, a high-ceilinged room with telltale black ball smudges on the white lapped walls. Panos has turned it into a library, a museum and a command center. The front and right-side walls are lined with bookshelves containing all those football books and hundreds of others—Herbert's magisterial biography of Lincoln and Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* among them—reflecting Panos' interests in history and classic literature. There are dusty, slightly deflated footballs painted with the scores of historic Exeter victories, alongside dozens of photographs, most notably one of Panos and two Blair teammates celebrating the famous 1999 come-from-behind victory over Peddie. There is a conference table that seats six and a giant flat-screen television for watching game videos or for playing cartoons when you bring your children to work. It is an office that may make sense only at places like Blair and Exeter, where coaches are not only the leaders of teams, but also the keepers of athletic legacies at the schools, and may, like Panos, have a keen enough appreciation for history to have earned a master's degree in the subject from Harvard.

Throughout his career, which led him to teaching and coaching appointments at Blair, Taft in Connecticut, Episcopal High

School in Virginia, Noble and Greenough School in Massachusetts, and, since 2021, Phillips Exeter in New Hampshire, Panos has been the consummate "triple threat" boarding school teacher. He has taught history, coached track and baseball as well as football, and lived with students in dormitories. While his current role does not include classroom teaching, he and his family—his wife, Shannon, an administrator at another local independent school, and their three young sons, James, George and Charley—serve as resident faculty in Exeter's version of Locke Hall: the school's largest girls dormitory. Panos and Shannon are popular dorm parents; on a given evening, the girls are in and out of the spacious apartment, looking for advice, snacks or just a place to hang out for a while.

As naturally as he has embraced a life of dorm duty and Saturday classes, of eating with his family in a dining hall alongside 400 teenagers, Panos came to Blair a day after he was admitted with no sense of what to expect. Not only was he the first in his family to attend college, but he also was the son of parents whose education in their native Greece did not extend even to high school. But Blair reflected his family's values, especially at the intersection of hard work and interpersonal connection. His experience over just nine months at Blair—playing on football coach Jim Stone's Mid-Atlantic Prep League championship team, having long conversations with Marty Miller and living in Mason Hall, where he made lifelong friends—drew him back to the boarding school world after he graduated as valedictorian from Merrimack College. While Panos' desire to coach was certainly inspired by Jim Stone's example, he was equally motivated professionally by Marty Miller. "Marty taught me to read the *New York Times* every day," he notes. "As a former college athlete, a legendary coach and a trained historian, he showed me that a good teacher and coach can never know enough." Panos came to Blair and went on to play football at Merrimack because of Jim Stone, which was no surprise to anyone, but his eventual pursuit of an undergraduate double major in history and political science was inspired by Marty and the Society of Skeptics. "What can be done in a year?" Marty asks rhetorically. "If you approach your postgraduate year the way Panos did, with diligence, curiosity and the desire to be the best you can be, it gives you the idea that you can do something."



Photo courtesy of Phillips Exeter Academy.

On a Monday in November, Panos and Dave Hudson, his offensive line coach, are in the old squash-court-cum-reliquary, conceiving a plan for their upcoming game against Phillips Andover, the Peddie to Exeter's Blair. The Exeter-Andover game has been played 143 times since 1878, the nation's longest active prep school football rivalry. Given that legacy, regardless of how either team has fared during the fall, beating Andover is what really determines whether Exeter's season has been successful. The Big Red are 6-1 thus far, but that one loss came at the hands of a tough Williston-Northampton team less than 48 hours ago, and everyone is still a little shocked. Panos and Dave know they need to acknowledge the setback during practice this afternoon, but to quickly focus on Andover.

Having already watched the video of the previous week's Andover-Suffield game, probably more than once, Panos reveals something in the Andover defensive line that looks like an advantage but is actually a weakness. This chink in the Andover armor will give the boys something specific to focus on, to help them put Williston behind them. Dave cues up the video on the large screen, and Panos begins to write on a whiteboard.

"There it is again," Panos says, pointing to the screen. "Here's where the weakness is, and it shows up when Suffield takes the ball here." At the whiteboard, he diagrams a strategy as fluently as if he's writing a sentence. It is deeply satisfying to watch someone who knows what he's doing.

"Nobody prepares better than Panos," Dave observes as Panos writes. A former college player and 40-year veteran of the sidelines, who also served as Exeter's athletic director, he's worked with dozens of successful coaches over the years. "That's why he's able

to come up with new ideas, to see solutions so quickly. And no one is a better in-game coach, either."

At schools like Blair and Exeter, the decision in recent years to continue football has become a conscious choice, rather than, as it had been for most of their histories, a matter of course. Bill Rawson, Exeter's principal, identifies his hiring of Panos four years ago as a manifestation of the school's renewed commitment to "take football seriously." "Safety is the most important thing," he says. "It's a big part of a strong program. Panos was a guy who had a track record of establishing safe football programs that were, at the same time, very competitive. He's fundamentally honest and brings credibility to Exeter football, and so good people want to work with him. Coaches want to recommend good players to him."

Jim Stone, who has worked with his share of coaches over his own 30-year career, echoes the Exeter head's observations. "It's clear that Panos cares about the kids, and he does as good a job as anyone at creating a culture in which his players care about each other, too. Good athletes around the country hear about the way he coaches and aspire to play for him."

Soon after his appointment at Exeter, Panos achieved what he had done in his previous head-coaching roles: turned a struggling program into a winner. Most importantly at Exeter, they had won the last three Andover games, halting an eight-year losing streak. They had been riding the momentum of those recent triumphs, as well as a season record that made them the presumptive 2024 New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) champions, but the Williston game still rankled; the history of games and, well, everything else is marked not only by things that turned out the way they were supposed to, but in equal measure, the things that didn't. "I've got to help them understand that it's important to take note of what we did wrong at Williston," Panos said. "But we have to spend most of our time focusing on what we have to do to beat Andover."



Photo courtesy of Phillips Exeter Academy.

In the slanting cold light of that Monday afternoon, the kind typical of late football season in New England, Panos, Dave and the rest of the coaches assemble to meet their team in Exeter's vast field house. The boys listen respectfully as Panos acknowledges the Williston game, and their understandable disappointment in having to wait until next year for another crack at an undefeated season. But it is clear that Panos has already laid the groundwork for the sort of maturity that enables his team to accept that defeat for what it was: the only Saturday afternoon this autumn when things didn't go the way they had hoped. They trust him, this team Panos and his other coaches had built, and one another, and they want to hear about Andover.

Two weeks later, Panos' Big Red won the NEPSAC championship over Connecticut powerhouse Avon Old Farms, establishing him as the only coach to have won that title at three different schools: Taft, Nobles and now Exeter. Everyone was duly impressed, but these triumphs savored, to paraphrase Fitzgerald, of anticlimax. Indeed, the week before, just as Panos' old team, the Blair Buccaneers, defeated Peddie in the fading light almost three hundred miles to the south, Exeter won handily on Andover's home turf, 42-21. Winning the NEPSAC? A great accomplishment, to be sure. But beating Andover? Like Blair beating Peddie, that was history.

Advancement



Carving a New Legacy for the Blair Academy Ski Team

After a decade of makeshift homes, the Blair Academy ski team finally has a facility that matches their ambition and drive. Nestled on Park Street, the newly renovated Ski Center offers more than just a place to store equipment—it's a hub for training, team bonding and chasing future championships. At the end of a blistering cold day of carving the slopes, the Blair ski team has a permanent place to hang their skis and unwind.

"As head coach this year, I am so excited to be driving this initiative, as well as creating a memorable, supportive and competitive environment for our student-athletes," Haley Chrobock-Palanca '15 shares. "The renovated Ski Center will help us not only become closer as a team, but also provide a place for our team to become stronger ski racers."

The ski team has enjoyed much success since Ms. Chrobock-Palanca's time as a skier herself, when she was the 2012 giant slalom state champion, a member of the 2014 state championship team, and ranked second best female skier in 2014 and 2015 by the New Jersey Interscholastic Ski Racing Association. More recently, the boys' ski team secured an impressive third-place finish overall in 2023, while the girls' team placed second in giant slalom states. Morgan Celley '25 added to the team's accolades, winning the girls' state champion title in 2023. With the addition of a new Center, the team looks forward to continuing their winning streak and attracting future champions to the sport they love.

"Having a beautiful and organized space to keep our equipment will be

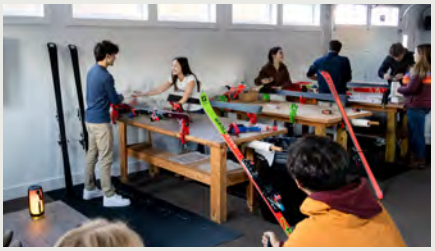
> **“I am excited to finally have our storage area turned into a space that will foster team camaraderie and community. I can’t wait to see comfortable couches, a TV for team film, more than sufficient tuning space and plenty of room for all our skis and gear.**
>
> *—Morgan Celley ’25*



Olivia Gore ’26 races for Blair Academy’s ski team.

huge for team morale and put everyone in the right mindset about the sport,” skier Ansel Hamlin ’26 says. “This facility will also help protect the team’s equipment, leaving us better prepared for competitions.”

Aside from a place to call home, the Ski Center will offer the team a place to store equipment, tune skis, watch race footage and gather as one. The Blair Academy ski team has always had a rich history full of tradition, camaraderie and success, and the renovations will continue to help them grow.



The newly renovated Ski Center.

If you are interested in supporting the team, please contact Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall at (908) 362-2032 or hallc@blair.edu.

THE LEGACY OF RONNIE MCLEAN '69

A unique personal history that led to vital support for Blair students

In 2008, the J. Ronald McLean Memorial Endowment was established by Jeff Corwin '65 to honor the memory of Ronnie McLean, a Blair Academy student from 1966 to 1967. This thoughtful gift supports necessary counseling resources for Blair students, ensuring they have access to vital mental health services as they navigate the challenges of adolescence.



Ronnie McLean '69's spirit endures through the J. Ronald McLean Memorial Endowment.

Jeff's journey that led to creating this endowment is one shaped by personal loss, compassion and a deep understanding of the importance of personal connection. When Jeff arrived at Blair in 1963, he was a struggling teenager dealing with the death of his mother and the absence of consistent parental guidance. The Blair community provided him with friendship, structure and a sense of belonging—though it took time for him to fully embrace these opportunities. Jeff graduated from Blair and pursued a degree in psychology, following his interest in child and adolescent development. Quite circumstantially, in the spring of his first year at college, he met Ronnie McLean, a 15-year-old from his neighborhood who was precariously surviving on his own without parental support or guidance.

Ronnie's story was one of resilience. He had faced years of neglect and abuse at home, leaving him with few options. The chance encounter with Jeff changed his life. Ronnie saw in Jeff a source of kindness, strength and hope, and Jeff, recognizing the similar struggles they both had faced, stepped in to try to change Ronnie's situation. "In a short time, Ronnie became the younger brother I had never had….I was determined to protect him from the awful circumstances that had plagued him and somehow orchestrate a stable support system that could give him opportunity and a better future." Jeff's determination led to Ronnie's enrollment at Blair, where he was safe from the abuse and given all the advantages that a Blair education might provide. Just 15 months after his graduation from Blair, Jeff, 18, returned to Blair as Ronnie's legal guardian and acting "parent." Though Ronnie's time at Blair was brief, it left a lasting impact on both their lives.

Tragically, Ronnie's life ended when he was only 19, leaving Jeff grappling with grief and an endless trail of "what ifs" that defied answers. After years of reflection, he was left with the question of how to honor his young friend's spirit. "I am certain that, had Ron lived, he would have made a positive difference in the lives of others. He was compassionate, caring and had a deep understanding of childhood adversity." Four decades later, during a return visit to Blair, Jeff found the answer: creating the J. Ronald McLean Memorial Endowment. Through its funding of professional counseling services, the endowment supports students who may be struggling with any kind of personal problem. With this gift, Jeff has ensured that Ronnie's legacy endures, fostering a culture of care and understanding at Blair Academy.

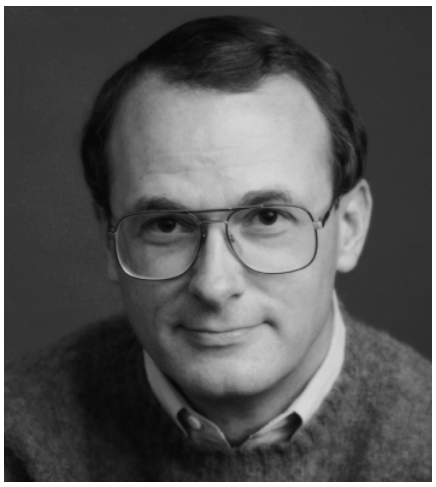
> **"It is important to me that Ronnie's legacy endures—that his life mattered."**
> *—Jeff Corwin '65*

"Adolescence is a time in your life when difficult but manageable problems can seem overwhelming. Today's kids have the extra layer of social media pressures—challenges that we could never have imagined many years ago. An effective counseling program, where kids do not feel stigmatized and can

reach out to talk to someone, is vital at a school today. If a student is sidetracked by significant problems in their personal life, all the rest of what Blair has to offer them can become out of focus. The regular availability of counseling resources may provide the key underlying support and continuity that allows a student to find a personal balance, affording subsequent success at Blair and beyond."

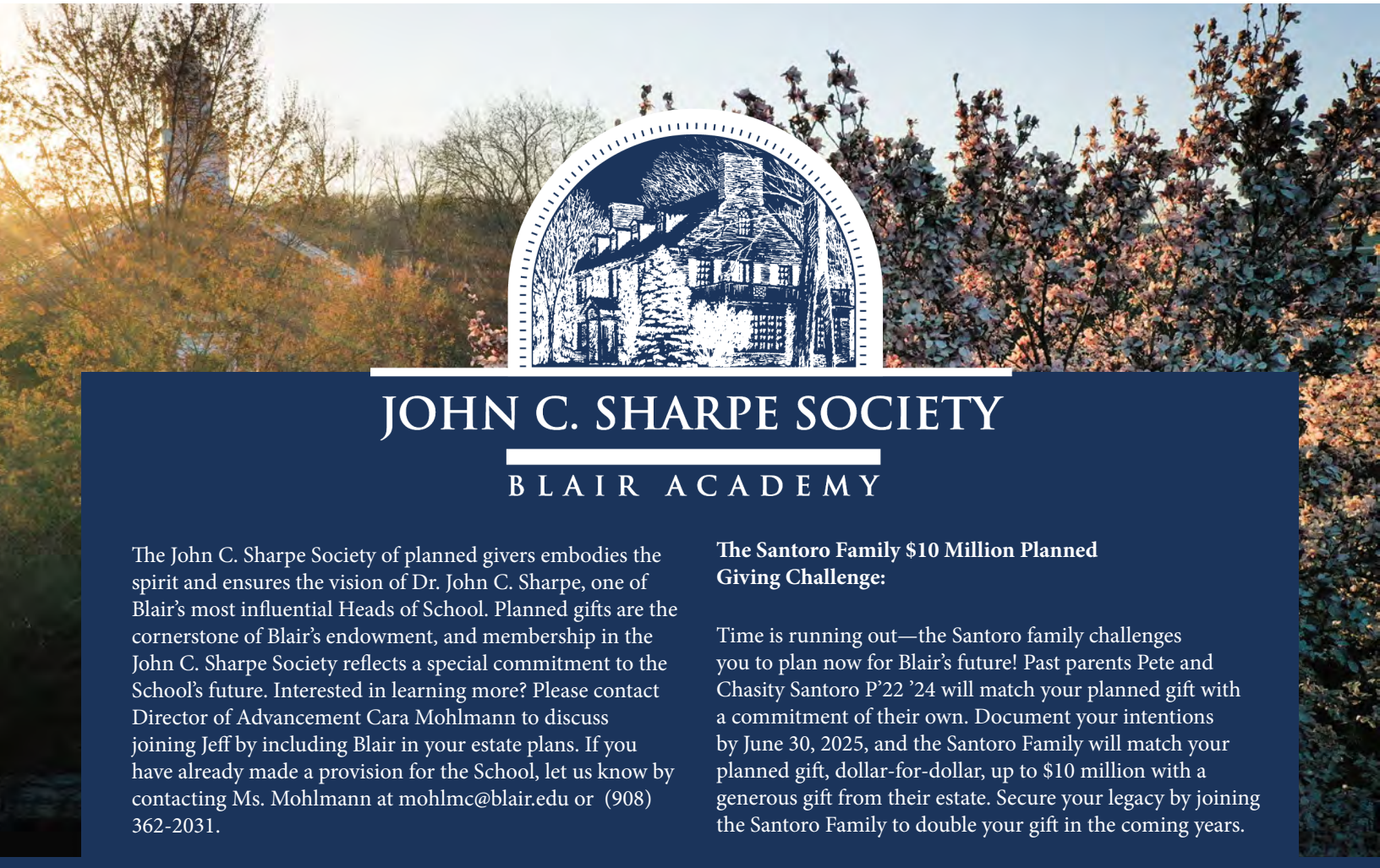
Since the establishment of this endowment, Blair's counseling department, services and programs have continued to grow to meet the needs of the School. Jeff has further honored Ronnie with a planned gift through his living trust that will add to the endowment, ensuring that it carries forth in perpetuity, supporting the Blair experience for future generations of students.

To join Jeff and others supporting counseling resources at Blair, your contribution can be designated to the J. Ronald McLean Memorial Endowment.



Jeff Corwin '65 honored his late friend with a memorial endowment to ensure Blair students have access to counseling services.

Throughout this article and in a series of interviews, Jeff Corwin '65 shared his reflections on the creation of the J. Ronald McLean Memorial Endowment. All quotes in this story are drawn from those conversations.



JOHN C. SHARPE SOCIETY
BLAIR ACADEMY

The John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers embodies the spirit and ensures the vision of Dr. John C. Sharpe, one of Blair's most influential Heads of School. Planned gifts are the cornerstone of Blair's endowment, and membership in the John C. Sharpe Society reflects a special commitment to the School's future. Interested in learning more? Please contact Director of Advancement Cara Mohlmann to discuss joining Jeff by including Blair in your estate plans. If you have already made a provision for the School, let us know by contacting Ms. Mohlmann at mohlmc@blair.edu or (908) 362-2031.

The Santoro Family $10 Million Planned Giving Challenge:

Time is running out—the Santoro family challenges you to plan now for Blair's future! Past parents Pete and Chasity Santoro P'22 '24 will match your planned gift with a commitment of their own. Document your intentions by June 30, 2025, and the Santoro Family will match your planned gift, dollar-for-dollar, up to $10 million with a generous gift from their estate. Secure your legacy by joining the Santoro Family to double your gift in the coming years.

In the *News*



Royal Ivey ’00 fires up the South Sudan basketball team from the sidelines.

CAUSE OVER SELF

THE STORY OF SOUTH SUDAN BASKETBALL

It's late July, and South Sudan's men's basketball team is center stage at London's iconic O2 Arena. The crowd of 20,000 is buzzing, but no one is focused on them. For South Sudan, largely unknown on the global basketball stage and overshadowed by giants, that was the reality. But that was about to change.

Sitting on the bench, South Sudan's assistant coach and Blair head boys' varsity basketball coach Joe Mantegna glanced over at Luol Deng '03, another assistant coach, team president and the first player Mr. Mantegna recruited to Blair Academy back in 1999. South Sudan was leading the United States by 14 points late in the second quarter. Let that sink in—South Sudan, the youngest country in the world, going toe-to-toe with basketball powerhouses like Stephen Curry, LeBron James and Kevin Durant. The two coaches exchanged a look, as if to say, "Can you believe this?"

"Luol just gave me a wink," Mr. Mantegna recalls, "and we got back to work."

By the final buzzer, South Sudan had lost by just one point. They had come that close to pulling off one of the greatest upsets in basketball history. But, in that moment, something bigger than victory happened. The world finally took notice. The world was watching South Sudan.



Luol Deng '03 serves as president of the South Sudan Basketball Federation.



Marial Shayok '14 averaged 14.7 points per game in his Olympic debut.

The team hadn't just pushed a powerhouse to the brink; they had announced themselves on the global stage. Suddenly, their program and players were thrust into the spotlight. And what people saw was not just a basketball team—they saw what happens when a group of individuals unites for something greater than themselves.

"For 25 years, I've led Blair Academy's boys' basketball team with the mentality of 'cause over self'—the idea that extraordinary things happen when one commits to something bigger than themselves," Mr. Mantegna explains. "And I've never seen a more powerful example of that than with the South Sudanese men's basketball team. These athletes—some of whom had never even set foot in South Sudan—weren't just playing a game. They were playing for their country, for their parents, for their heritage and for a sense of belonging that transcended borders."

Fast-forward to the Paris Olympics, and Mr. Mantegna—alongside Luol, head coach Royal Ivey '00 and shooting guard Marial Shayok '14—was a part of history. The team became only the second African nation ever to win an Olympic basketball game, representing the youngest country in the world. The roster included players from Australia, North America and across the globe. Many of



South Sudan's head coach Royal Ivey '00 is supported by his assistant coach and former high school coach Joe Mantegna.

the players, displaced from their homeland, did not grow up in South Sudan, but they felt immense pride for the country from which their families came.

"Under the tremendous leadership of Royal, they played with a fire, a passion and a connection that is unmatched," Mr. Mantegna recalls. "And, as a coach, that's what matters most—a team that plays without ego or selfishness, purely for one another."

The road to the Olympics wasn't smooth. In fact, they weren't even supposed to be there. The only reason they made it to the qualifiers was because Algeria's team was sidelined by COVID. That twist of fate opened the door. But, once they got their foot in, they didn't just walk through it—they kicked it down.

In just four years, South Sudan went from having no national basketball program to standing among the top 25 teams in the world. Their rise has been the fastest in International Basketball Federation (FIBA) history. No team had ever climbed from the bottom to Olympic glory as quickly. And they did it despite everything being stacked against them.

South Sudan has only been independent for 13 years, but those years have been filled with war, displacement and hardship. Millions of South Sudanese have been forced into refugee camps or scattered across the world seeking asylum. It's a country that has struggled to find hope. But, through basketball, the Bright Stars offered a glimmer of pride. The team became a beacon for a nation that has endured so much pain. Through sport, they gave people a reason to believe again. They showed that greatness can come from anywhere—even from a nation that has known more heartache than joy.

"And that is the greatest accomplishment of all," Mr. Mantegna explains. "More than the wins, more than the history they made, it was the hope our team ignited. Our group showed the world that South Sudan is capable of greatness, that a team of young men playing for something bigger than themselves can change the narrative of an entire nation. Through basketball, we found a way to uplift not just a team, but a country."

BOARD CHAIR MARIA VINCI SAVETTIERE HONORED

In February, Board of Trustees Chair Maria G. Vinci Savettiere P '17, Esq. was honored by Seton Hall Law's Rodino Society as a distinguished member of the legal profession and community trailblazer. Not only is Maria a champion for the Blair community, but she is also a fierce advocate for victims of child abuse and/or neglect and for children who have witnessed violence. Since 2003, Maria has served as executive director of Deirdre's House, Morris County's designated child advocacy center for child victims. Deirdre's House is the only site in Morris County where a child victim can be forensically interviewed, medically examined and treated, and receive mental health services, free of charge. Congratulations from the Blair community, Maria, on this well-deserved honor.



Blair Academy IN MEMORIAM

1942 James C. Gorman
September 21, 2023
Mansfield, Ohio

1945 William Y. Bogle III
January 22, 2025
Redding, Connecticut

1946 John F. Rose Jr.
December 31, 2024
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

1947 Donald E. Carey
December 19, 2022
Gilford, New Hampshire

Frederick H. Kresse
July 11, 2024
Walnut Creek, California

1948 James K. Meneely Jr.
April 5, 2024
Montgomery, Texas

Former Trustee
David D. Wakefield
December 11, 2024
Wilmington, Delaware

1951 Allan J. Brodsky
July 28, 2024
Silver Spring, Maryland

Roy T. Mattucci
August 10, 2024
North Hampton, New Hampshire

1953 Malcolm M. Ponder
September 18, 2021
Bolinas, California

Fritz C. Trinler
San José, Costa Rica

1955 Thomas S. Martin
March 31, 2024
Heppenheim, Germany

Kenneth A. Studstill
May 16, 2024
Titusville, Florida

1959 John T. Drake
January 31, 2022
Dublin, Ohio

C. David Howell
August 30, 2024
Easton, Pennsylvania

1960 Robert E. Baumann Jr.
October 31, 2024
Rockville Center, New York

Edward E. Durkin
October 5, 2024
Cape Coral, Florida

1961 Richard K. Inglis
December 14, 2023
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

1964 George H. Roenning
October 19, 2024
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

1965 Edward M. Sleeper
October 28, 2024
Voorhees, New Jersey

1966 William L. Egolf
December 1, 2023
Pinellas Park, Florida

1967 Frank W. Hamilton III
January 2025
Palm Beach, Florida

Robert J. Harmon II
October 26, 2024
Winter Haven, Florida

1968 Stephen Dunn
May 18, 2023
Simpsonville, South Carolina

Steven A. Schiff
September 28, 2024
Quakertown, Pennsylvania

Henry A. van der Kwast
November 26, 2024
Curaçao

1969 Raymond T. Bohn III
July 15, 2024
Durham, North Carolina

1974 Peter A. Deshotels
March 8, 2021
Curacao

1983 Brian A. Latessa
August 8, 2024
Bristol, Rhode Island

1989 Nina-Clara Schnall
November 7, 2024
Oakland, California

Former Faculty
Ralph J. Kneeream Jr.
November 28, 2024
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Former Trustees
Elizabeth B. Dater
November 27, 2024
Greenwich, Connecticut

Eileen Smith
November 8, 2024
Naples, Florida

1942

James C. Gorman
Originally from Ohio, Jim traveled "quite a distance," as noted in the 1942 *ACTA*, to spend a year with his class on the hilltop. During his time at Blair, he swam, played golf, contributed to the *ACTA*, served as the electrician for the Academy Players and was a member of the camera club. He was a dedicated supporter of the Blair Fund, earning his membership in the True Blue Loyalty Society, and supported the golf course, where his name is inscribed on the dedication of the seventh hole. After Blair, he continued his education at The Ohio State University (OSU) before leaving to serve in the Air Force from 1942 to 1946. Jim was a decorated World War II Army Air Corps pilot, flying more than 70 combat missions in the Philippines and New Guinea, and he later returned to earn his degree from OSU. He was a charter member of the 179th Airlift Wing of the Ohio National Guard, flying P-51s, and a lifelong advocate for aviation. As president of the Gorman-Rupp Company, founded by his father, he served for more than 73 years, stepping down from the board of directors only recently. He served as president of the Mansfield Rotary Club, Mansfield Aviation Club and the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Foundation, among others, and contributed to numerous local initiatives, including the establishment of the Gorman Nature Center, the Frank P. Lahm Aviation Museum and the YMCA Sports Complex. Jim flew more than 240 flights for the EAA Young Eagles Program and helped raise funds to establish OSU at Mansfield. His numerous awards include the Mansfield-Richland Area Chamber of Commerce Chairman's Award, the Construction Industry Manufacturer's Association Lifetime Achievement Award and the EAA Chairman's Award. Jim shared 65 years of marriage with his wife, Marjorie, and their love for family and aviation defined their life together. His legacy lives on through his contributions to aviation, education and community enrichment. Predeceased by Marjorie, Jim is lovingly remembered by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

1945

William Y. Bogle III
Known affectionately as "Bud" among friends, he came to the hilltop for an impactful year, accompanied by his twin brothers from the Class of 1947, John and David Bogle. At Blair, Bud played varsity soccer, wrote for *The Breeze* and was "one of the best-natured fellows on First East," according to the 1945 *ACTA*. He went on to serve in the Marine Corps during World War II, earning the Victory Medal, before embarking on a business career in marketing and sales, as well as branching out as an entrepreneur and inventor. Bud would have celebrated his 80th Reunion this spring and kept in close touch with his classmates as a class representative, a role for which he was recognized in 2015 and held for more than 20 years. A member of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers, he was also an enthusiastic attendee of Alumni Weekend, Blair receptions and other campus events, inspiring others with his passion for and generous philanthropic support of the School over the years. A cherished tradition for Bud and the Bogle Scholar community, the annual Bogle Scholars Luncheon became an event at which he graciously represented the Bogle family since Jack's passing in 2019. Students greatly enjoyed meeting him and learning about the Bogle boys' legacy at Blair. Bud was honored for his many contributions and support by receiving the Alumnus of the Year award in 2021. He will be dearly missed by many in the Blair community. Bud is survived by his children and grandchildren.

1946

John F. Rose Jr.
When Jack graduated from Blair, he left a lasting impression. The 1946 *ACTA* described him as follows: "[His] belief in fair play and a magnetic personality have made Jack one of the best class presidents Blair has ever had." He served on the student council both years he was on campus, captained the basketball team, managed the business operations for the *ACTA* and wrote for *The Breeze*. He remained connected with his classmates through correspondence and support of the True Blue Loyalty Society. After Blair, he was awarded a prestigious four-year Cornell University National Scholarship, earning a biochemistry degree while playing varsity basketball for four years and serving as captain in his senior year. A proud U.S. Army veteran, Jack served as a battalion surgeon in Wiesbaden, Germany, achieving the rank of captain before resuming his medical training. He graduated from Cornell University Medical College in 1954, completing his general surgery training at New York Hospital, now known as New York-Presbyterian, and a urology residency at Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital. He held leadership roles in the American Urological Association and the American Group Practice Association, receiving the Wallace M. Yater Medal in 1979. He later joined Geisinger Medical Center, where he specialized in cancer and pediatric urology surgery, retiring in 1994. Jack was a distinguished surgeon and dedicated family man. He cherished travel, fishing and time with family. From 1987 to 2012, Jack and his wife enjoyed summers at their lake house in Quebec before settling in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where they built a close-knit community of friends. In Pennsylvania, Jack attended St. Joseph Catholic Church in Danville and St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lancaster. He was preceded in death by his son

and brothers, Al Rose ’48 and Bud Rose ’51. He is lovingly survived by his wife of 69 years, Lillias, two daughters and grandchildren.

1947

Donald E. Carey
Don spent two accomplished years at Blair. He was a member of the band, *Stylus* and glee clubs, swam and played tennis. He remained connected to Blair his whole life, supporting the Blair Fund, attending reunions and keeping in touch with classmates. A Princeton graduate and Johns Hopkins-trained doctor, Don’s career reflected his dedication to compassionate care and public health. He pursued three distinct careers: as a virologist with the Rockefeller Foundation (1961–1971) studying tropical diseases, a pediatrician at the Laconia Clinic (1971–1989) and a Peace Corps physician in West Africa (1989–1994). Don lived a rich and multifaceted life, marked by service, adventure and deep connections. A true lover of the outdoors, Don pursued hiking, cycling, skiing and sailing. He hiked all of New England’s 4,000-foot mountains and cycled across the United States alongside his wife of 71 years, Barb, and their son. Together, they shared countless adventures, including trekking in Nepal, climbing Mount Kenya and running the New York City Marathon at age 70. His zest for life extended to his interests in jazz, cinema and composing heartfelt poems for loved ones. Rooted in service and guided by a strong ethical foundation, Don’s spiritual journey began with the Salvation Army and evolved into a humanistic perspective. Known for his humor, warmth and wisdom, he left a legacy of compassion and curiosity. Don donated his body to Dartmouth Medical School, a final act of generosity reflecting his lifelong commitment to helping others. Don is survived by Barb, his children, 10 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and fellow Buccaneer, his cousin, Doug Seaver ’63.

Frederick H. Kresse
A three-year Buc, Fred was an active member of the Blair community, playing football, running track and exploring his love of music. He was also often spotted around Blair Lake with his fishing pole in hand. In life, Fred was a dedicated innovator, educator and community leader. After earning his master’s in experimental psychology at the University of Wisconsin, focusing on learning theory and educational materials, he moved to Boston in 1962. There, he worked at the Boston Children’s Museum and, later, became an independent consultant, creating interactive materials that included the *Boston Artifacts* book for the 1976 bicentennial “Where’s Boston?” exhibition. Fred was deeply engaged with the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Needham, Massachusetts, where he pioneered the Community School and held various leadership roles. An avid cyclist, Fred rode regularly with the Charles River Wheelmen and celebrated his birthdays by cycling his age in miles, a tradition he continued until age 83, always in the company of friends. His contributions to education, community building and his passion for cycling left a lasting impact on those around him. Fred is survived by his children, granddaughters and great-granddaughters, as well as an extended family.

1948

James K. Meneely Jr.
After graduating in 1947, James, who was better known as “Skip,” returned for a postgraduate year in 1948. He felt strongly connected to the Class of 1948 and officially changed his graduation year to reflect that. Throughout his life, he supported the School through the Blair Fund and The Class of 1948 Study Room, attended reunion weekends and often visited Blair during his annual trip to the United States. Skip’s life was marked by dedication, service and achievement. He began his studies at Dartmouth College, setting a javelin record his first year and joining Theta Chi fraternity but left early to serve in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. As part of an elite communications intelligence team, he learned Russian and served in Europe and North Africa. After completing his degree at Dartmouth, Skip attended the Thunderbird School of Global Management, mastering Spanish and embarking on a 35-year career with Armco Inc., working in Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and the United States. In retirement, Skip embraced an active lifestyle as a master gardener, holiday-letter carrier, lifeguard, and volunteer with the Peace Corps in Croatia and Montenegro. At 70, he resumed javelin throwing, setting world records and earning a place in Dartmouth’s “Wearers of the Green” athletic hall of fame. Above all, Skip cherished his roles as a devoted husband, father and stepfather. Skip is survived by his wife, Susan, and family.

1951

Allan J. Brodsky
Hailing from Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, Allan spent three years at Blair. During his senior year, he could be seen participating in the Webster Society and press club, where he also served as business manager. He participated in the ski club and Varsity “B” and took on leadership roles managing spring track, varsity cross country and winter track. He supported the Blair Fund throughout his life, as well as the Class of 1951 Scholarship. Allan graduated from Lehigh University, earning a degree in sociology, served in the U.S. Army in Germany during the Korean War and spent time on the National Ski Patrol.

1948
Former Trustee

David D. Wakefield
A "six-year man," Dave Wakefield first came to the hilltop following in the footsteps of his brother, Bob Wakefield '46. Active and involved in school life from the beginning—he sang in the choir all six years—Dave made the honor roll by 1944, participated in numerous clubs and societies, and became Blair's leading tour guide. An impressive presence on the School's athletic fields, Dave played football and baseball, ran track and cross country, and was a cheerleader. Dave graduated from Blair in 1948. He went on to meet his wife Carolyn "Lee" B. Wakefield after they both attended the College of William and Mary. Lee and Dave would go on to raise two children together, Ellen and David Jr. Graduating from the College of William and Mary in 1952 with an AB in economics, Dave went on to serve the nation as a 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army from 1952 to 1954, before earning his MBA from New York University in 1959. A few years later, he found his professional calling in banking and established a career with J.P. Morgan that would span four decades. His leadership at the financial institution led to impressive growth, and when he retired as a managing director and chairman in 1992, Dave had grown the J.P. Morgan subsidiary he started in Wilmington, Delaware, from 40 employees to more than 2,000.

Throughout his life, Dave remained deeply connected to his alma mater and engaged with the friends he made on the hilltop. As a Trustee from 2003 to 2011, and later as an Honorary Trustee and recipient of the 2008 Citation of Merit, Dave became one of Blair's best ambassadors. He served as the chairman of the *Ever, Always* Campaign, volunteered for countless projects benefiting the School and worked as an integral member of the 1848 Society Committee and class representative. Further, Dave made significant named gifts to the School, supporting the J. Li Golf Center and the Chiang-Elghanayan Center for Innovation and Collaboration. Above all, Dave will be remembered by all who knew him at Blair not just for his engagement and philanthropy; he will be remembered for his graciousness, warmth and good humor. His sunny disposition earned him the nickname "Sunbeam" while a student at Blair, and, indeed, that trait was a defining one throughout his life. As a Blair Trustee, Dave often worked closely with former Head of School and Blair Trustee Chan Hardwick, who lauded Dave at Alumni Weekend in 2008 for his optimism, experience and insight that helped guide Blair with "clarity of purpose" and made him "among the most significant and impactful new members of the Blair Board of Trustees in this new century."

Dave Wakefield's impact on Blair serves as an inspiration to all who aspire to make a lasting difference in the lives of others. Dave was asked once by a journalist why he got involved in all that he did. He was driven, he said, by a simple yet profound reason: "I really like people." Dave was predeceased by his brother, Bob, and is lovingly survived by Lee and their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

His diverse career included roles with the Boy Scouts of America, Ketchum, Binney and Smith, and ventures as a small business owner. He and his wife, Clementine ("Clemmy"), whom he married in 1958, lived in Pittsburgh for 55 years before moving to Maryland in 2015. Together, they were active in civic, cultural and volunteer roles, including being one of the founding families of Temple Ohav Shalom in Pennsylvania. Allan was an avid photographer, bagpiper, library board member and supporter of Clemmy's social justice efforts. In retirement, he remained active in the Riderwood Senior Living Community, enjoying photography, cultural outings and family gatherings. Allan is remembered for his moral compass, love of family, passion for music and technology, and zest for life. He was predeceased by Clemmy and is survived by his children and grandchildren.

Roy T. Mattucci
A two-year Buc, Roy led an active life at Blair as a member of Varsity "B", the Spanish club and dramatics club. A well-known figure in the pool and on the athletic fields, Roy captained the swim team and played football and baseball his senior year. He remained connected with the School and his class through his support of the Blair Fund, membership in the True Blue Loyalty Society and by attending his class reunions whenever possible. After Blair, he received his BA in history from Dartmouth College in 1955. Following graduation, Roy proudly served in the U.S. Army with the 63rd Field Artillery

Battalion in Korea from 1956 to 1957. Roy spent his career in the construction industry, serving as a principal with several local firms until his retirement. Before relocating to New Hampshire in 1969, he worked for Frank Briscoe Construction Company and the Glendale Construction Company in New Jersey. Roy was a talented athlete and avid Red Sox fan, holding season tickets for many years. He also enjoyed scuba diving, boating, tennis, photography and attending local jazz venues. Roy was a longtime member of the New Castle Yacht Club, Seacoast Tennis Club and local photography clubs. Roy was predeceased by his brother, Don Mattucci '45, and is survived by his wife of 69 years, Doris, and their children.

1955

Thomas S. Martin
Tom was a two-year senior upon his graduation day at Blair and was recognized as a "powerful bass" in the School's singing groups. He was a member of the Webster Society, International Society, camera club and on the honor roll, and he participated on the varsity wrestling and baseball teams. He stayed connected to the School through his support of the Blair Fund, serving as a member of the True Blue Loyalty Society and visiting with classmates when he was in the States. A Cornell University graduate who specialized in electrical engineering, Tom served 20 years in the U.S. Army Signal Corps, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and completing two Vietnam tours. He met his wife, Margret, while in Germany and married in 1966. After service, Tom worked as a defense contractor in Germany, supporting the U.S. Army Europe, later providing communication support in the Balkans and NATO headquarters in Belgium. One notable assignment for Tom and Margret involved sourcing and shipping a 15,500-book library to Rwanda. They then traveled to Africa to help organize it and teach recipients how to use the necessary software. Tom retired in 2008 after a 47-year career, embracing life in Heppenheim, Germany, to be near family. Active in the Lions International Club since 1993, he enjoyed cultural pursuits, including singing in a French choral group. Tom is survived by Margret, his daughter and sister.

Kenneth A. Studstill
With aspirations to see the world outside of his small hometown in Florida, Ken transferred to Blair at the beginning of his junior year. He spent his time outside the classroom writing for *The Blair Breeze* and in the pool, racing for the varsity swim team. Ken went on to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, graduating with a BA in political science. He then served as a naval officer for three years in the Pacific after attending the Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island. Following his military service, he returned to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, earning his JD. Ken began his legal career in Titusville, Florida, initially serving the county before establishing a successful private practice. A voracious reader and amateur writer, Ken was deeply interested in politics and philosophical questions, including quantum physics. He enjoyed old movies, telling jokes and sharing captivating stories from his legal career. Dedicated to education, Ken prioritized providing opportunities for his sons and is remembered as a hardworking, devoted family man who ensured a secure and comfortable life for his loved ones. He is survived by his wife, Charlotte, his sons and his four grandchildren.

1959

C. David Howell
A native of Easton, Pennsylvania, David spent his upper two years of high school at Blair. When he was out of the classroom, David wrote for *The Blair Breeze* and *Stylus* publications and was a member of the science club, varsity soccer, winter track and varsity tennis teams. Throughout his life, he remained very close to his classmates and supported Blair loyally, serving on his reunion committees and as a member of both the True Blue Loyalty Society and the John C. Sharpe Society. David was a graduate of the University of Virginia, earning degrees in philosophy and political science. He attended Tulane University Law School before earning his JD from Villanova University. David began his career as a trial attorney and later served as an assistant attorney general, supervising both the Chicago and Springfield, Illinois, areas, before retiring in 2003. David served on the Northampton County Democratic Committee and the Northampton County Children, Youth and Families Advisory Board. He was a member of the Forks Township Zoning Hearing Board and served on the Forks Township Board of Supervisors. In addition, he was a Lehigh County Court Appointed Special Advocate for children and was a member of the Easton Lions Club, Wheels of Time and the Pomfret Club. He enjoyed walking the Lafayette College campus with his dog, a retired racing greyhound. David is lovingly remembered by his wife of 43 years, Reta, daughter and grandchildren.

1960

Robert E. Baumann Jr.
Captain of the varsity wrestling team, Bob graduated from Blair as a New Jersey State Wrestling Champion. He was also active on the varsity soccer team and ran track. Outside of athletics, Bob participated in the dramatics club, the Blair Academy Players and wrote for *The Breeze*. He continued his education at Siena College, graduating in 1964 with a degree in economics, where he helped start and coach the men's lacrosse team. Bob was commissioned as a Marine first lieutenant before attending law school. After earning his law degree from Gonzaga University in 1967, he was admitted to the New York Bar in 1969. For over 50 years, he practiced law in New York City and on Long Island, with offices in Oceanside, Garden City and Freeport. Beyond his legal career, he was a passionate soccer fan and coach, dedicating his time to youth soccer through the Rockville Centre Soccer Club, Long Island Junior Soccer League and Eastern New York State Youth Soccer Association. Bob took great joy in being involved in his grandchildren's athletic lives as well. Bob is survived by his wife, Mary Jane, his daughters and family.

Edward E. Durkin
Ed was known for his impressive performances on the varsity swim team during his three years on the hilltop. After Blair, he completed a postgraduate year at the American School of Switzerland in Lugano. He then attended the University of Hawaii before ultimately graduating from the University of Miami, where he continued his swimming career. Ed had a dynamic career as an executive and partner in anthracite coal companies and the Pocono Downs Racetrack in northeastern Pennsylvania. After retiring, he found joy in running an instructional swimming business. A lifelong fitness enthusiast and accomplished athlete, Ed excelled in tennis, skiing and horse racing, owning and racing thoroughbreds and standardbreds for nearly 30 years. He was a member of several prestigious clubs, including The Westmoreland Club and International Polo Club, and spent over 50 winters in Wellington, Florida. Ed is survived by his children, 13 grandchildren and extensive family and friends.

1964

George H. Roenning
Known as "Red" during his three years at Blair, George was an active presence in the Webster Society, dramatics club, choir, glee club and outing club. He excelled in athletics as well, participating in baseball, football and track. In later years, he supported the Blair Fund and the Class of 1964 Scholarship, was a member of the True Blue Loyalty Society and served on his reunion committee. He returned to Blair for a memorable 50th Class Reunion, after which he expressed he hoped not to wait another 50 years to get back to campus again. George lived a life rich in family, service and adventure. After graduating from Bucknell University, George served as a medical administrator in Alaska during the Vietnam era before attending Rutgers Medical School. He went on to become a dedicated family physician in Door County, Wisconsin, delivering compassionate care for over three decades and mentoring young doctors. An avid outdoorsman, George loved fishing, hunting, running, cycling and skiing. After the loss of his first wife, Barbara, he focused on raising their children and later found love again with his second wife, Kristi. Together, they blended their families into a close-knit unit. Beyond medicine and nature, George enjoyed reading, music, gardening and volunteering in the arts community. Despite health challenges, George's humility, generosity and zest for life left a lasting legacy. George is survived by Kristi, his children and grandchildren.

1965

Edward M. Sleeper
A two-year Buc, Ed was involved in every corner of campus. He captained the varsity football team in the fall, wrestled in the winter and ran track in the spring. He served on the Insley dorm council and the class council as a prefect, while also writing for *The Blair Breeze*. He stayed closely connected to Blair and his classmates, returning to campus for visits, reunions and athletic events. As a consistent supporter, he earned membership in the True Blue Loyalty Society and, in honor of his 50th Reunion, Ed also supported the Class of 1965 Scholarship. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine in 1973, Ed worked at Delaware Valley Animal Hospital before opening his own practice in his home. In 1976, he expanded to a five-acre farm in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, building a veterinary hospital rooted in care and excellence. Beyond his practice, Ed was a passionate advocate for animal welfare, donating his services to injured wildlife, service animals and police K9s. He participated in Earthwatch conservation programs and shared his knowledge through lectures. His kindness, mentorship and commitment to animals will be deeply missed, and his legacy will live on through the work of Mount Laurel Animal Hospital. Ed is lovingly survived by two daughters and one granddaughter.

1967

Frank W. Hamilton III
A two-year Buc, Ted wrote for *The Blair Breeze*, participated in the French club and Webster Society, and played on the varsity football and baseball teams. He remained closely connected with his classmates, serving on two reunion committees and celebrating his 50th Reunion with his class while supporting the Class of 1967 Scholarship. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania with a BA in psychology, he spent nearly 50 years on Wall Street, serving as senior managing director at Promontory Interfinancial Network among other prominent roles. A distinguished executive, he was widely respected for his industriousness and ingenuity. Ted was also an active leader in his communities, notably serving as president of the board of the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme, Connecticut. Adored by many, Ted had a magnetic presence, lighting up every room with his humor, storytelling and charm. Whether in Old Lyme, Nantucket, Harbour Island or New York City, Ted was a joyous, irreverent character who brought happiness and laughter to those around him, often late into the night at places like his beloved Union Club. Ted is survived by his sons, daughter-in-law, granddaughters and many friends.

Robert J. Harmon II
A four-year Buc, Bob served on the student council as a prefect, was a member of the glee and outing clubs, played on the soccer and basketball teams and managed the varsity golf team. Later in life, he supported the Blair Fund and participated in his class reunions. After Blair, Bob continued his education at Denison University, earning a degree in English, and furthered his studies by completing a JD at Birmingham School of Law. Bob was a beloved individual known for his warmth, generosity and dedication to both his family and the Parkinson's community. He had a diverse career as a banker, lawyer and brewery owner but found his true purpose after his Parkinson's disease diagnosis. Bob founded a support group in Lake Ashton, Florida, participated in clinical trials and organized an annual golf tournament that raised over $500,000 for The Michael J. Fox Foundation, inspiring and mentoring others along the way. He was a devoted husband

Former Trustee

Elizabeth B. Dater
Beth, wife of Emeritus Trustee Wm. Mitchell Jennings '63, served on Blair's Board of Trustees from 2013 until her passing, with only one year off between terms. A managing director of Angelo Gordon & Co., Beth's career in global investment management spanned three decades and left an indelible imprint on the industry. A graduate of Boston University, early in her career, she worked at Lehman Brothers and served as a vice president and U.S. equity analyst at Fiduciary Trust Company of New York. Later, serving in leadership roles at Warburg Pincus Asset Management and, subsequently, at Credit Suisse Asset Management, Beth pioneered new business ventures and navigated mergers and acquisitions, propelling her to the forefront of her field and leading her to become a frequent guest on PBS's long-running *Wall Street Week* program. In 2013, Beth shared her wealth of experience with Blair, dedicating four years to the Board of Trustees and continuing her involvement from 2019 until her passing as an ex-officio member of the Investment Committee.

Beth and Mitch often opened their home to the Blair community, graciously hosting gatherings at their Connecticut residence and the New-York Historical Society. Throughout their time on the Board as voting Trustees and later, as Emeritus and ex-officio Trustees, the couple made fostering Blair connections, service to others and leadership support of the School a priority.

Throughout her life, Beth's philanthropic efforts underscored her dedication to education and community empowerment. As a trustee for The New-York Historical Society, NYU Medical Center and a member of the advisory committee for Women In Need, she steadfastly pursued causes that embodied her values.

At Blair, Beth's generosity extended across more than four decades and countless initiatives, ranging from the Blair Fund to capital campaigns. Her support facilitated transformative campus enhancements, including the renovations of Bogle Science Center and Timken Library, the construction of the Winter Sports Complex, Kathryn and Lakeside dormitories, and the openings of Sigety Alumni House and the Chiang-Elghanayan Center for Innovation and Collaboration. A faithful advocate for teachers and students alike, Beth played a pivotal role in establishing the Class of 1963 faculty chair and ensured access to a Blair education through her support of the Bogle Brothers Scholars program.

Beth is survived by Mitch, her siblings and extensive family and friends.

to Cecily, celebrating 44 years of marriage, and a loving father to twin daughters. Bob was cherished for his humor, passion for golf, fondness for desserts, love of wine and his legendary storytelling. His legacy includes not only his contributions to Parkinson's research but also the unwavering love and support he shared with his family and community. Bob is survived by Cecily, their daughters, and many friends and family members.

1968

Steven A. Schiff
During his three years at Blair, Steve was editor in chief of the *ACTA*, played varsity baseball as a pitcher, varsity basketball as a forward, guard and co-captain, and was an active member of the Blue & White Key Society, Locke Dorm Council and Spanish club. Photography was another of his interests, and many candid shots in the *ACTA* were captured through his lens. He had an infectious love for soul music, and whether it was the Four Tops, Aretha Franklin or Otis Redding playing from his record player, he couldn't help but dance, declaring "Blair needs soul...ya know?" Steve continued his education at the University of Virginia before returning to Allentown to join the family business, Lawrence Schiff Silk Mills. Notably, the 1968 *ACTA* featured a unique heather-colored, wool-like cover with light red and honey stripes, which curiously matched one of Steve's sport coats. The fabric for the cover was generously donated by his father. Later in life, Steve discovered a passion for long-distance running, becoming a marathoner and an avid swimmer. He will be remembered for his easy going manner (off the court), artistic eye and enthusiasm for life, music and the joy of competition. Steve is survived by his children, mother, brother and sister.

Henry A. van der Kwast
Henry's one year at Blair was filled with new friendships and unforgettable experiences, including encountering ice and snow for the first time. He was a member of the camera, glee and Spanish clubs. He remained connected with his class throughout the years and attended reunions, including Blair's 150th celebration. He was a loyal supporter of the Blair Fund and a key contributor to the Class of 1968 Society of Skeptics Endowment Fund. Living on the island of Curaçao, Henry was a prominent entrepreneur and cultural advocate. As chairman of the board at Maduro Holding, a family business dating back nearly 190 years, he led Maduro Travel, S.E.L. Maduro & Sons, Seawings and Captain Don's Habitat resort on the island of Bonaire. Henry was also deeply committed to preserving and promoting Curaçao's culture and history. He served on the boards for the Mongui Maduro Foundation and the Jewish Cultural Historical Museum, and he played a key role in the Maritime Museum. He cofounded Curaçao's Insel Air in 1993 and, on the eve of his 70th year, launched Henry's Gin. Henry will be remembered for his warm and curious nature, his dedication to Curaçao, his sharp business acumen and his significant contributions to both the arts and Blair. He is survived by his five children and grandchildren, his brother, Steve van der Kwast '74, and relative, Philip Alvarez-Correa '09.

1969

Raymond T. Bohn III
Trey, born in Charlottesville, Virginia, and raised in Flemington, New Jersey, was a devoted family man and a successful entrepreneur. He spent four years at Blair, serving as a class officer, secretary and treasurer. He played football and soccer and served as captain of the golf team. Trey also spent his time outside the classroom writing for *The Breeze* and as a member of the Spanish club. Throughout his life, Trey remained connected with Blair, serving as class representative from 2010 to 2021, supporting the Class of 1969 Faculty Wings Fund, being a member of the True Blue Loyalty Society and attending class reunions. After Blair, he graduated from Franklin & Marshall College, earning his degree in history. Trey pursued a lifelong love of golf, the outdoors and community. He built a successful career in the food industry, founding Simply Fresh, a seafood supply company known for its exceptional service. Trey was a member of Aldersgate United Methodist Church during his time in Durham, North Carolina, and later became a member at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Raleigh. He cherished his wife, Jean, and was a supportive brother, uncle and friend. He and Jean shared a love of entertaining friends, travel and family. Known for his faith, warmth and generosity, Trey leaves a lasting legacy of love and kindness. He is survived by Jean, his children, stepchildren and grandchildren.

1983

Brian A. Latessa
Brian attended Thayer Academy before transferring to Blair for his senior year, where he had the opportunity to spend that time with his brother, Bob Latessa, former faculty member and coach. He was a stellar athlete, shining as the baseball team captain and starring on the football fields, as well as the wrestling mat. He attended Springfield College, where he majored in business and competed on the Springfield College wrestling team. Brian was a devoted family man, passionate mentor and inspiring educator. Brian's career began in wedding planning before transitioning to teaching and coaching, with his first coaching role at Long Meadow High School. At Wilbraham & Monson Academy in Massachusetts,

he led the wrestling team to a top league title. Later, he joined Mt. Hope High School in Rhode Island, where he taught and coached wrestling, leading his son, Benjamin, to state success. He also founded the Huskies News Network, mentoring students and guiding them in their careers. Known for his humor, competitive spirit and love for life, Brian left an enduring legacy of dedication to family, students and athletics. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Monique, three children, siblings and extended family.

1989

Nina-Clara Schnall
A three-year senior upon graduation, Nina was a friendly presence on campus, known for her articles in the literary magazine and interactions at the Society of Skeptics. After Blair, Nina led a life of profound creativity, dedication and service. She graduated from Pitzer College, earned a master's in cultural anthropology from the University of California Santa Cruz and conducted her PhD fieldwork in Haiti as a Fulbright Fellow. Fluent in French and Kreyòl, she worked with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and as a photographer and translator for Haiti's only Kreyòl-language newspaper. In Oakland, Nina pursued her love of dance, studying and performing at BrasArte, the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts and Carnaval San Francisco. She also explored writing and healing, earning an MFA from the California Institute of Integral Studies, publishing in literary and psychoanalytic journals, and presenting at conferences. As the creative director of Mountain Yoga, she developed innovative workshops combining writing, movement and healing. After her ovarian cancer diagnosis in 2020, Nina turned her focus to helping others. She became a yoga instructor, creating workshops for cancer survivors and contributing to medical conferences. Her blog and essays provided guidance on navigating cancer treatment, and she organized a dance-a-thon that raised over $20,000 for ovarian cancer research. A dedicated environmentalist, she cofounded the Mindful Writers group, facilitated climate grief workshops and created a Certified Wildlife Habitat in her Oakland backyard. Nina's enduring legacy is one of resilience, creativity and compassion, leaving an indelible mark on those she touched through her art, activism and generosity. Nina is survived by her parents, brother and sisters, and her partner, Omari.

Former Faculty

Ralph J. Kneeream Jr.
Dr. Ralph Kneeream was a distinguished organist, scholar, educator and translator whose career spanned 75 years. A part of the Blair community from 1972 to 1982, he served as chair of the music department and a French teacher. As organist and choir director for numerous churches and temples across the United States, he filled prestigious roles at Middle Collegiate Church in New York City and Memorial Chapel in the U.S. Army War College. He held a PhD in music from Northwestern University, with earlier degrees in French from Columbia University. In addition to studying under legendary musicians in France, such as Nadia Boulanger, Ralph authored influential articles and completed notable French-to-English translations, including works by Charles Tournemire and Marcel Dupré. As an educator, he held appointments at Columbia University and The HARID Conservatory. His accomplishments included playing the organ for the Emmy- and Peabody-winning documentary *A Golden Prison: The Louvre* and performing at iconic venues such as Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral and New York City's The Riverside Church and St. Patrick's Cathedral. An active member of the American Guild of Organists (AGO), Ralph served in leadership roles across various chapters and represented the mid-Atlantic states in the AGO National Competition. Ralph also served honorably in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, earning several service medals. His lifelong dedication to music, education and cultural exchange left an enduring legacy in both the American and European organ music communities.

FOUR THINGS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

1 Blair Alum Emerson Irving Romero Makes the Google Doodle

In September, Google's iconic home page "Google Doodle" celebrated Blair Class of 1920 alum Emerson Irving Romero, a trailblazing Cuban-American silent film actor. Romero pioneered some of the first techniques to make films accessible for Deaf audiences, including early captioning. His innovations, which included vibrating alarms for the deaf and deaf-blind, earned him the New York City Civic Association of the Deaf's prestigious civic achievement award.



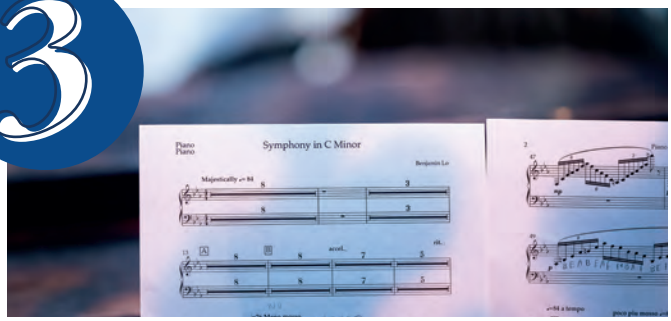
2



Hello, World!

This spring, 44 seniors traveled as part of Blair's Intersession program, immersing themselves in the rich cultures of Havana, Cuba; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Kisumu, Kenya. Above, Director of School Photography Tyson Trish captures the serene morning mist settling over a tobacco farm in Viñales, Cuba.

3



Carnegie Hall

Since its opening in 1891, Carnegie Hall has earned its place as one of the world's finest concert halls. Legendary musicians such as Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Mahler, George Gershwin, Billie Holiday and The Beatles have all graced its stage. On Wednesday, April 2, Blair's student musicians joined their company, offering a performance to remember.

4

Blair Football Clinches MAPL

Blair's football team dominated the field again this season, winning the 2024 Mid-Atlantic Prep League (MAPL) championship with an undefeated league record. Their hard work has secured their bragging rights as the team to beat.



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REGISTER TODAY!

Blair Academy

ALUMNI Weekend

June 6-8, 2025

Join us for Alumni Weekend, where we will celebrate the successful conclusion of the *All In* campaign on Saturday, June 7, with a festive dinner and dancing. We look forward to toasting the close of one chapter in Blair history and the exciting future that lies ahead!

Visit **www.blair.edu/2025-alumni-weekend** for more information.
Registration closes on May 23, 2025.

Questions?
Contact Courtnay Stanford ’95, Director of Alumni Relations, at (908) 362-2059 or stanfc@blair.edu.